

Paralegals Connect Quarterly Magazine

First Quarter April 2024 Issue 23



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Paralegals Connect is an online community for paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys. Currently, our groups have approximately 45k+ members worldwide.

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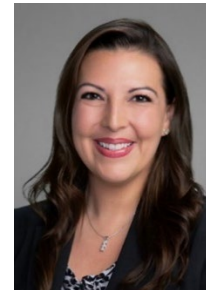
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Best Virtual Paralegal LLC

MEET THE FOUNDER OF PARALEGALS CONNECT

Crystal Cornett is the busy woman behind the scenes at Paralegals Connect. She works hard to keep Paralegals Connect a professional and helpful platform. Crystal is constantly creating new ideas to help paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys to succeed in the legal industry!



Crystal Cornett, Founder of Paralegals Connect

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Crystal Cornett is a Paralegal with over 19 years of experience in the legal industry. Crystal earned her first Paralegal Certificate from the University of Houston in March 2006. In 2010, Crystal earned a second Paralegal Certificate and her degree from Center for Advanced Legal Studies. She is a member of the Lambda Epsilon Chi National Honor Society for Paralegal / Legal Assistant Studies (LEX). Crystal is a commissioned Notary Public in the State of Texas and a Commissioned Remote Online Notary (RON). Since 2017, Crystal has served on the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) for Center for Advanced Legal Studies.

Over the course of her paralegal career, Crystal has practiced in Family Law, Elder Law, Probate, Guardianships, Health Law, Social Security, heavy litigation in Intellectual Property and Bankruptcy, and residential and commercial Real Estate.

In 2013, Crystal founded Paralegals Connect, the leading online community for paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys worldwide. Our mission is to empower individuals at every stage of their paralegal career journey, providing assistance to those considering a paralegal career, studying in a paralegal program, seeking employment, exploring virtual/freelance options, or looking to enhance their professional skills.

In 2018, Crystal founded The Paralegals Connect Quarterly Magazine. Our magazine is published quarterly and features invaluable information and insights from legal field experts. With a membership of over 44k individuals worldwide, our reach and impact continue to grow. To stay connected and join the conversation, Paralegals Connect can be found on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, providing an interactive and vibrant online community for support and idea exchange. Visit linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect or www.ParalegalsConnect.com to learn more.

In February 2022, after 18 years of working as a paralegal, Crystal made the decision to resign from her position as a Real Estate paralegal marking the end of a successful chapter in a law office. However, Crystal's dedication to the legal community didn't stop there. In March 2022, she embarked on a new journey with Newhouse + Noblin, LLC, where she currently thrives as a paralegal recruiter. In addition to her recruiting responsibilities, Crystal also serves as a paralegal consultant, offering invaluable expertise and guidance in resume assistance, and sharing tips to help paralegals reach their career goals. With a passion for supporting paralegals and a wealth of industry knowledge, Crystal remains committed to making a positive impact in the legal community.

WHAT IS PARALEGALS CONNECT?

Where legal professionals come together to accelerate their careers.

Founded in 2013, our community has experienced remarkable growth, evolving into four dynamic Facebook groups tailored specifically to the needs of aspiring and practicing paralegals, as well as future attorneys.

We understand the importance of staying informed and connected in the ever-evolving legal industry. Our mission is to provide you with valuable information, resources, and a supportive network to help you excel at every stage of your legal career journey.

Join our vibrant community of over 45k members worldwide, and tap into a wealth of knowledge, guidance, and opportunities.

Whether you're seeking career advice, professional development opportunities, or simply looking to connect with like-minded individuals, our groups are here to empower you.

Accelerate your paralegal journey, shape your future as a legal professional, and expand your horizons with Paralegals Connect. Join our growing community today and unlock your potential in the legal world.



Website: www.ParalegalsConnect.com

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Paralegals Connect (Main Group) (22,623 Members)

www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnect

Our first and largest support 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: Employment Board (12,759 Members)

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.

Virtual/Freelance Paralegals Connect (5,012 Members)

www.Facebook.com/Groups/Virtual.FreelanceParalegalsConnect

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

Paralegals Connect: Study Group (1,132 Members)

www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnectStudyGroup

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

Paralegals Connect: Instagram (1,399 Followers)

www.Instagram.com/ParalegalsConnect

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Paralegals Connect: X (Twitter) (319 Followers)

<https://Twitter.com/ParalegalsCnct>

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Paralegals Connect: Facebook Page (1,306 Followers)

www.Facebook.com/pg/ParalegalsConnect

Paralegals Connect: LinkedIn

Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9052061/> (943 Members)

Company Page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/paralegals-connect>

Founder: Crystal Cornett: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/crystalcornett/>

www.ParalegalsConnect.com

MEET OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS

We would like to thank our Affiliate Partners who make it possible to print and distribute the Paralegals Connect Magazine to our members, paralegal schools, and large firms throughout the U.S.

Becoming an Affiliate Partner with our groups offers worldwide visibility to approximately **45k+ combined group members** in the legal industry.

**Only our Affiliate Partners are permitted to advertise within our Groups.*



Paralegals Connect is always looking for Affiliate Partners that can offer our paralegals, legal assistants, future paralegals, and future attorneys the skills and services to help them succeed in their legal 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.

To become an Affiliate Partner with Paralegals Connect, please contact Crystal Cornett Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com or visit www.ParalegalsConnect.com/Become-an-Affiliate.html

Center for Advanced Legal Studies

Center for Advanced Legal Studies was founded in 1987 to provide education and training for those seeking to enter the legal profession as a paralegal. The **Paralegal Certificate** program provides students with essential paralegal skills and includes courses such as Introduction to Law and Ethics, Legal Research and Writing, Interviewing and Investigation, Corporate and Business Law, Civil Procedure, Computers and the Law, Family Law, and Personal Injury. Students can choose from on-campus morning or Saturday courses or attend 100% online.

Those seeking a more comprehensive preparation for their paralegal career, or those seeking their first college degree, can continue to the Associate of Applied Science Degree Paralegal Program which includes additional paralegal electives such as E-Discovery, Oil and Gas, Intellectual Property, and Immigration Law. Academic general education courses round out this paralegal degree program.



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Whatever It Takes Josh Chandler, CEO of Justice Solutions Group talks about 20 years as a real "P.I.", and the real reason he built JSG.

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Best Virtual Paralegal LLC

Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (“BVP”) (“The Attorney Panic Button™”) is an American legal support and educational service provider for the legal professionals of post Covid-19. Its mission is to revolutionize the way attorneys and paralegals work together.

The Best Virtual Paralegal Team’s vision is to solve legal professionals’ problems by providing the best legal support services, legal admin services, consulting, coaching, and educational services at a fixed rate, when possible, and a fair hourly rate by frequently communicating with clients to help improve productivity, maximize resources, and control expenses. We aim to empower today’s legal professionals to design a career and lifestyle that continuously grows at a sustainable rate, allowing them to achieve their career and lifestyle goals. The Best Virtual Paralegal Team is dedicated to helping lawyers and paralegals embrace technology, innovative strategies, mindset skills, and legal skills. As a result, together we can achieve the lifestyle that complements each legal professional’s career journey.

The Best Virtual Paralegal team consists of advocates, legal support experts, educators, and trained coaches exclusively focused on helping attorneys, paralegals, and legal associations solve their unique problems. Our services and pricing strategies use a holistic approach to ensure we meet the needs of each client’s unique problems, budget, and overall journey. We’d love to collaborate with you and your local communities to increase your productivity, profitability, growth and more.

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Solid Serve Legal provides process service, mobile and remote online notary, document preparation, and court filings. As paralegals, we understand the unique needs of those who work with and for attorneys -- whether in corporate or law firm setting. That means our customer service is Five Star Superior to any other process service company in the country.

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We'd love to chat about your next project!



Holly A. Sheriff, MSLS, MCC is a legal support expert and thought leader, an experienced litigation paralegal, a coach, & the founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (BVP). She is committed to helping legal professionals A.C.E. their company, community, & workplace culture journeys! If you see her in the Paralegals Connect groups, drop her a “hi or hello,” and make her day!

Are you ready to scale, grow, & succeed? Let’s Connect & Chat Today! [Contact with the Best Virtual Paralegal Team](#)

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The Paralegal Writer™

Jackie Van Dyke, Certified Paralegal and owner of **The Paralegal Writer™**, inspires best writing practices and confidence in legal writing. She is a faculty member in the Paralegal Studies Program at The George Washington University and a Professor of Legal Research and Writing at the University of San Diego (USD) Law School Paralegal Certificate Program. Jackie is a Board Member of the San Diego Paralegal Association and also the Editor of OnPoint, NCAPA's quarterly magazine. She supports numerous paralegal associations throughout the country and has numerous published articles.

Jackie's passion is to help legal professionals at all levels, including paralegal students, with professional document and letter design, persuasive memoranda writing, precise legal citations, and improved grammar and punctuation. The Paralegal Writer offers a quarterly signature course, "Pen A Memo™," to support applicants taking the Skills Exam and those looking to master the art of IRAC. The Paralegal Writer also recently launched a Citation Workshop Series, which provides an hour of practice monthly. Mastering Legal Writing in 8 Weeks will launch in early March! Payment options are always available.



Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.
Thank you!

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The Disability Teacher

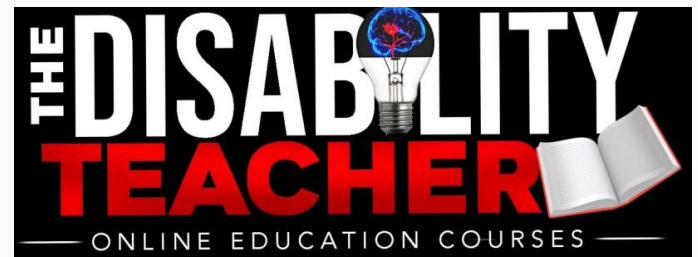
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For more information about The Disability Teacher®, you may reach us through the platforms below:

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- How to complete Social Security Forms.

We also offer EDPNA study sessions in March, April and May for non-attorneys preparing to sit for the EDPNA examination in June.

The Network of American Legal Support Services Professionals - ("The NALSSP")

NALSSP is excited to announce the new NALSSP.COM online directory to the Paralegals Connect community as an Affiliate Partner. Paralegals Connect members can save 30% at initial sign-up on new directory subscriptions through August 31, 2023, by applying the discount code [WELCOMEPARALEGALSCONNECT30].

The directory welcomes U.S. based legal support service professionals and businesses as well as those that support them with relevant products and services [professionals, suppliers, providers, podcasters, merch vendors, influencers, etc.]. Wherever professionals are within the legal support services ecosystem, The NALSSP is the place for them!

The NALSSP directory will be a multi-faceted resource for legal support service professionals. It will be a one-stop-shop – serving as an online marketing solution, a place to find colleagues offering other support services and providing business/professional development consulting.

NALSSP.COM is a community of real people being seen by real people. Social media is great. However, many such accounts are administered by social media managers (non-decision makers), AI bots and not actual prospective clients. These accounts may like your posts and your page, yet they have no real connection to anyone that is seeking your services. The NALSSP directory will connect you with clients in real life. Our professionals won't get lost in other overcrowded and spam filled online forums, job boards and groups engaging with irrelevant profiles.

The NALSSP online directory features twelve professional categories all in one place with easy search filtering: Appearance Attorneys, Court Reporters, Forensic Experts, Language Interpreters, Mediators, Medico-Legal, Notary, Paralegals, Private Investigators, Process Servers, Restorative Justice Practitioners and Security Services professionals. Users can search the directory by geographic location, service category, and keyword. Each general category will contain related service professionals. For instance, Legal Nurse Consultants will be listed under "Medico-Legal", and Proofreaders will be listed under "Court Reporter."

Process Servers are always in demand for paralegals. Our Process Server Quote Request feature gives paralegals a simple tool to request bids from multiple process servers in a given local area by zip code - reducing their workload (no need to make multiple calls or send multiple emails). Just fill out one form with all the details of a civil process assignment and submit it. An email will go out to each Process Server under that zip code. Even now, as the directory grows, your quote requests will be received, and you will be provided with multiple options from within the region of your assignment.

NALSSP

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LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

The demand for freelance and remote paralegals is rising. NALSSP.COM provides paralegals with affordable online marketing to prospective clients who are searching for such services. As both the demand and number of freelance paralegals continues to grow exponentially, The NALSSP online directory will be the connecting link. We encourage paralegals to position themselves now by signing up for a new directory listing.

Paralegals can also sign up on our directory as individuals for career advancement. As the directory grows, many other legal support service professionals, potential employers and recruiters will be viewing our site. Our professionals can showcase themselves in a clean and well-presented online profile.

The NALSSP online directory is currently in the Early Enrollment Period for new professionals. We are marketing NALSSP.COM to a cross-section of professionals throughout the legal community who are prospective subscribers and clients. As they subscribe and create their listings, we intend to be the go-to resource for legal support services nationwide. The growth of the directory will take time. We look forward to seeing the development of The NALSSP community.

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Embracing AI in Law: A Legal Pro's Friend, Not Replacement

By: Sean Heck
CobbleStone Software



The Myth of Law Professionals Replaced by AI

In an era where "AI is coming for legal professionals," the legal community is abuzz with the question: "Will AI replace my role?" The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in law and legal practice has led to a paradigm shift, raising concerns about artificial intelligence replacing legal professionals. However, it's crucial to understand that AI in the legal field is not a harbinger of replacement but a catalyst for transformation. To that end, let's talk about legal professionals, lawyers, AI, and business innovation.

The Role of AI in Law

Artificial intelligence in law, or legal artificial intelligence, refers to the use of AI technologies to enhance and streamline legal processes. The use of AI in legal services ranges from document creation and execution to visually engaging [contract analytics](#), revolutionizing how legal professionals approach their work. But can AI replace the paralegal? The short answer is a definitive no. Artificial intelligence, and the legal profession are not enemies. Rather, contract and law artificial intelligence are tools for the lawyer, paralegal, and other legal professionals to succeed.

Enhancing Efficiency, Not Replacing Expertise

AI and paralegals are forming a collaborative relationship, where AI takes on repetitive, time-consuming tasks, allowing for focus on more complex, strategic aspects of work. In legal artificial intelligence, AI tools assist in clause optimization, [contract review](#), and data organization, but they lack the nuanced understanding and ethical judgment that human legal professionals provide.

To that end, proper contract lifecycle management (CLM) is impossible without a legal industry expert at the helm using contract AI systems to shred through legal documents, intellectual property matters, and other legal work.

The fear of "law professionals replaced by AI" is largely unfounded. AI in law practice is about augmentation, not substitution. It supports law professionals by providing quicker access to relevant information and predictive insights, but it doesn't possess the empathetic and critical reasoning skills that are essential in legal decision-making.

To that end, what if something goes awry during contract negotiation? What if this "something" is unpredictable or legally esoteric to the point that contract AI models are unprepared to deal with it? Such is just one of many reasons large language models and other contract AI tools will never replace legal professionals.

How Will AI Affect Legal Professionals?

AI in law and legal practice is transforming the legal landscape by:

- **Increasing Efficiency:** AI in the legal field automates mundane tasks like document searching and filling a contract with standard language, reducing the time spent on these activities.
- **Enhancing Accuracy:** Legal artificial intelligence minimizes human error in tasks like contract analysis and due diligence.
- **Contract Analysis:** AI in legal services offers advanced contract analytics via reports and [visually engaging dashboards](#), helping legal professionals make more informed decisions.

The Future: AI and the Legal Profession

The question, "How AI will revolutionize the practice of law?" is apt. Artificial intelligence in the legal field is not just a tool but a partner in the legal journey. The integration of AI in law practice means:

- **Better Client, Partner, or Vendor Services:** General counsel and other legal professionals empowered by AI can provide more accurate, efficient services and cut contract negotiation timelines.
- **Innovative Legal Solutions:** AI in law and legal practice streamlines repetitive tasks - fostering creativity and encouraging professionals like paralegals to think outside the box.
- **Continual Learning:** AI in the law sector is a resource for ongoing education and knowledge enhancement. Moreover, contract management AI can continuously learn from new data.

Legal professionals and artificial intelligence are entering a phase of symbiosis. The AI legal field is evolving, and with it, the role of lawyers and paralegals. AI in law practice is an assistant that offers a new perspective on problem-solving and strategy formulation.

Conclusion: The Future is Collaborative

The narrative of artificial intelligence taking over the role of legal professionals is a misconception. Instead, AI in law signifies a future where lawyers and paralegals are more empowered, efficient, and equipped to handle the complexities of the legal world. The use of AI in legal services is not about diminishing the legal professional's role but enriching it. AI in the legal field is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the legal profession, ensuring that while AI is indeed coming, it's arriving as an ally, not an adversary.

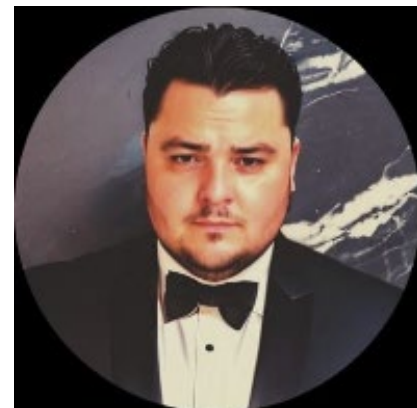
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Sean Heck is a Content Marketing Manager at CobbleStone Software



Paralegal Certificate vs Paralegal Certification

By: Tami Riggs,
Director of Outreach and Career Services at
Center for Advanced Legal Studies

A paralegal certificate or degree is often required to qualify for paralegal job opportunities. Earning an academic credential significantly enhances employment opportunities for anyone seeking to diversify their career portfolio and showcase their qualifications for a legal position.

Paralegals can obtain formal education through a training program like those available at Center for Advanced Legal Studies to earn a paralegal certificate or degree. Once paralegals have achieved a requisite level of education and experience, they may choose to seek a paralegal designation and become *certified*. Several national associations offer certification opportunities. However, paralegals who do not pursue certification through one of these associations are just as likely to enjoy long-term, career success. Paralegals are qualified to perform their responsibilities by completing an educational program, receiving training on the job, or through actual work experience.¹ A distinct advantage exists for paralegals who begin their career by earning an academic credential. As they progress, certification can add value to the expertise previously acquired through education, training, and experience.

There are many paths to becoming a paralegal²

For most, it starts with completing a specialized program and earning a certificate or degree in paralegal studies from a post-secondary institution before beginning their careers. Those already working as paralegals without first earning a certificate or degree can greatly increase career mobility and advancement opportunities by earning a paralegal credential. Regardless of the path that is taken, hiring potential and higher wages are often directly linked to educational attainment. Employers directly manage their hiring standards - and nearly all specify an educational component. There are no federal licensing regulations in place for paralegals. Currently, only California regulates its paralegals at the state level. Two other states have adopted rules in specified areas.³



Paralegals who want to further enhance their careers often seek certification.

This is much different than pursuing a paralegal certificate. Earning a paralegal certificate and becoming a *certified* paralegal both have a place in entering and progressing in the paralegal profession, but there is a distinction between the two. One shows the acquisition of specialized knowledge through the completion of a focused paralegal course or program through a college or university. The other validates competency measured against standards held by a third-party paralegal association (after education and experience have been attained) – usually by way of an exam. Candidates holding a paralegal certificate have completed an educational program. However, this does not make them a *certified* paralegal.

A paralegal can hold a certificate and become certified – but these are two different things.

Earning a paralegal credential makes becoming a certified paralegal possible. The industry term for holding a paralegal certificate is *certificated* not *certified*. What is the difference? Let's clear up the confusion.

- **“Certificated”** paralegals have acquired practical knowledge and skills through coursework and have been awarded an academic credential in the form of a paralegal certificate from an educational institution. They have studied legal concepts in depth and had legal specialty training that enables them to enter and work successfully in the profession.
- **“Certified”** paralegals have been assessed, tested, and recognized by an independent national entity for skills acquired through ongoing education and experience. Each entity measures competencies against its exclusive standards through examination and has its own eligibility and renewal criteria.

A Paralegal Certificate is a law-based academic credential conferred through a college or university after completing an approved and accredited educational or training program.

It provides evidence that an individual has a quantifiable understanding of the profession. Students may complete only legal specialty courses to earn a certificate, or they may add to their certificate work by enrolling in an advanced program to complete general education and additional courses to earn an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or even a master's degree. Paralegal certificate programs are often twofold. Designed primarily for entry-level students without an undergraduate degree, they can also benefit non-credentialed paralegals, or career changers with a degree, who are interested in a legal career. A certificate denotes the completion of specialized study. Degrees signify that specialized study culminated in a diploma.

Certification is a professional designation and service mark exclusively owned and granted by a national paralegal association.

Service marks (trademarks) are attached to a specific brand identity associated with an independent certifying entity. There are several certification types, each retained by a different organization. Each organization has specific education and experience prerequisites, holds exclusive rights to its designations, and requires passing a test (or multiple tests) to use its certification designations.

Only after passing a third-party examination administered by one of these entities, can a paralegal denote they are "certified" and use certification and certification abbreviations for that entity behind their names or in their titles.

Individuals must meet all criteria of the certifying organization, and yearly continuing education is required to maintain certification. Paralegals may voluntarily pursue one or more designations to strengthen and support their professional development after they acquire the necessary education and experience. The three most common certifying paralegal organizations include:

1. **National Association of Legal Assistants** – NALA owns the right to grant those it certifies to use the designation "Certified Paralegal" (CP®) and "Advanced Certified Paralegal" (ACP®); <https://nala.org>
2. **National Federation of Paralegal Associations** – NFPA owns the right to grant those it certifies to use the designation "CORE Registered Paralegal" (CRP®) and "PACE Registered Paralegal" (RP®); <https://www.paralegals.org>
3. **National Association for Legal Support Professionals** – NALS owns the right to grant those it certifies to use the designation "Accredited Legal Professional" (ALP), "Certified Legal Professional" (CLP), and "Professional Paralegal" (PP); <https://www.nals.org>

To start or further enhance your legal career, or to strengthen your qualifications for alternative paralegal career paths and certification, education is key.

Specialized paralegal education is often a standard requirement for employers hiring paralegals and is typically a criterion for all certifying entities. To become *certified*, one must first earn a *paralegal certificate*, or have a combination of other education and substantive experience, to apply for certification. To recap:

"Certificated" = Earning a Paralegal Certificate

- Typically for newcomers but benefits non-credentialed paralegals and degreed professionals making a career change
- Results from an educational process and is highly valued by legal entities
- Is a credentialing document conferred by an academic institution
- Indicates completion of coursework and curriculum with a specific focus
- Demonstrates quantifiable understanding and acquisition of practical knowledge and skills to work in the field
- One and done but can be a pathway to a degree

"Certified" = Becoming a Certified Paralegal

- Requires educational prerequisites and/or a period of professional experience but is not a licensing requirement
- Results from an external assessment process by a third-party organization with their own standards
- Is a trademarked designation owned and awarded by an independent organization
- Measures competencies against standards exclusive to each organization by way of examination
- Has ongoing requirements to maintain

At Center for Advanced Legal Studies, paralegal education is ALL we do, and it's all we have done since 1987. We are experts in paralegal education and training and can prepare you for a successful and rewarding paralegal career. We teach to the highest standards and offer our accredited paralegal programs, including a Paralegal Certificate, a Paralegal Associate Degree, and a Bachelor of Arts: Law and Business nationwide. Contact us today at www.paralegal.edu to learn more!

¹ <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/profession-information/information-for-lawyers-how-paralegals-can-improve-your-practice/>

² Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Paralegals and Legal Assistants, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm> (visited February 18, 2024).

³ <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/profession-information/educational-information-for-paralegals/>



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Tami Riggs is Director of Outreach and Career Services at [Center for Advanced Legal Studies](http://www.paralegal.edu) in Houston, Texas. She has an extensive and varied professional background that spans criminal justice, paralegal education, and international school marketing and communication. Her career has been guided by a focus on developing strategic partnerships that facilitate school growth and student opportunity. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Texas State University. Connect with Tami on [LinkedIn](#).

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What Is a Conditional Job Offer?

And what you should and should not do.....

By: Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP

On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC



Defining A Conditional Job Offer

Usually, a conditional job offer means you have been selected for the job, but the position requires some prerequisites, and if you don't successfully complete the requirements, they will/can rescind the job offer.

A conditional job offer does not mean you are hired. The offer usually has additional steps or investigation steps you must pass before the job is yours.

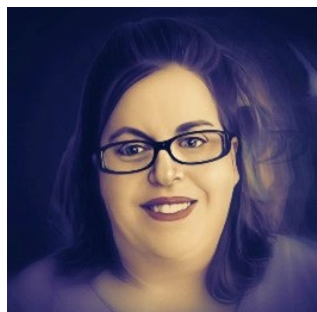
What To Do and Not Do

Conditional job offers are tricky. Usually, conditional job offers are presented when the employer requires a background check or government clearance. There are things you should and should not do.

- 1) When you are presented with a conditional job offer, get the offer in writing. Ultimately, you can respond in three ways: to accept the offer, decline it, or negotiate. Either way, get it in writing.

- 2) Stop and think about the offer, role, and hiring process. If you need more information, don't be afraid to ask questions. For example, ask for an explanation if you're unsure why they need to conduct a criminal record check. Employers should be happy to provide extra details.
- 3) Ask what the employer needs to be able to issue a start date.
- 4) You should check your phone messages and emails three times daily.
- 5) You should respond to questions promptly.
- 6) You should not stop interviewing for other roles.
- 7) You should not quit your current role/job.
- 8) You should not stop seeking new opportunities until an official start date has been mutually agreed upon.

The Best Virtual Paralegal Team hopes you've found these tips and advice on conditional job offers helpful; whether you're expecting security clearance for a job you've just applied for or you're ready to send a response to a conditional offer letter you've received, this article should help.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP, is the founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (BVParalegal). Holly is currently the President of the New York City Paralegal Association. She has worked as legal consultant, paralegal, & certified coach in multiple disciplines since 1990. Holly has been an affiliate contributor & expert with Paralegals Connect since 2020. Holly is currently accepting new clients who want to build & grow successful legal careers. Contact Holly at (717) 747.3588 text/voice | [LinkedIn](#) | [@bvparalegal](#) on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn & Instagram <https://lnk.bio/Bvparalegal> | [Holly's links and Biz Card](#)

Paralegal Resume Tips and Red Flags

By: Crystal Cornett,
Founder of Paralegals Connect &
The Paralegals Connect Magazine, and
Managing Director at Newhouse Noblin, LLC



After 18 years of working in law firms, in 2022 I made the decision to resign from my position as a paralegal and became a legal recruiter with a primary focus on paralegal placements throughout Texas. In these two years I have learned a lot about creating paralegal resumes. I thought it would be helpful to the paralegal community to share what I have learned about creating the perfect paralegal resume. Remember these are basic suggestions, and there are several ways to draft a professional resume.

Tip No. 1: Resume Formatting

A paralegal is responsible for drafting and formatting documents, so your resume is a big reflection of your formatting skills.

- Use at least an 11 or 12 font size so your resume is easy to read. Also make sure the font type and size are consistent throughout your resume.
- Ensure your headers are also consistent throughout your resume. Don't underline/bold some headers, leaving some not underlined/bolded.
- Ensure your line spacing is consistent throughout your document.
- Do not over format your resume with unusual fonts or colors.
- Be sure to add a space between each position.
- Do your best to keep your resume to one to two pages. If you have a lot of important information to include, do not be pressured into cramming everything onto one page, as many suggest, especially if this means your work experience is difficult to read or font size is too small. If your resume is longer than two pages, remove some irrelevant job duties, or any information past 10 years of experience.
- If using bullet points, be sure they are not unaligned on your document.
- Adhere to the widow/orphan rule by ensuring that titles and subtitles are kept together across pages. Avoid leaving a header stranded on one page without its corresponding subtitles.

Tip No. 2: Contact Information

The top of your resume should include your full name, email address, phone number, city and state, and a link to your LinkedIn profile. All too often, I receive resumes, and I have no way of contacting the candidate if this information is not included. For privacy reasons, I would not include your full home address.

- Do not include this information in the header of the document, as not all applicant tracking systems are able to properly read and parse information stored in this section of a document.

Email Tips:

- Be sure to have a professional email address such as: CrystalMCornett@gmail.com. I often get resumes that include unprofessional email addresses such as hotsexyguy@yahoo.com, etc.
- Log into your email account settings and be sure your name is correctly entered. Sometimes, I get emails and they come from nicknames such as 'Home Email' or 'Hot Houston Gal' instead of your full name.

Possible Red Flag: If the city or state are not included with your contact information, it is difficult to determine if the candidate is local or if the candidate is applying while living out of state/country, which could lead to confusion and your resume possibly being overlooked.

Tip No. 3: Career Objective

Add a small Career Objective to your resume. This could be very important especially if your resume only includes the last ten years of experience, and you have additional legal experience not listed. This section should be used to state the position you are seeking, add skills and qualifications, enthusiasm in the roll, professional goals, etc. Remember to tailor your objective for each job application to ensure it aligns with the specific requirements and goals of the position and company. If you are having issues with getting all your information onto one or two pages, this section can be eliminated and can be included in a cover letter.

Tip No. 4: Education

If your education is impressive, I recommend placing this information at the beginning of your resume before listing your professional experience. Be sure to list any degrees earned, graduation dates, certifications, academic honors, etc.

Tip No. 5: Work Experience

- In general, only the last 10 years of experience is necessary on your resume. If you have an extensive resume, or some of the older positions were short term, positions over 10 years ago should be eliminated. The exception would be if most of your positions were long term and are valuable to include them on your resume.
- Add a few bullet points of the most substantial job duties for each position. Remember that the biggest difference between a Paralegal and Legal Assistant is the substantial legal job duties. A Legal Assistant may list administrative duties such as filing, organizing, answering phones, or setting appointments. Paralegal job duties should focus on substantial legal duties such as performing legal research, drafting complex legal documents, interviewing clients or witnesses, or preparing for trial.
- If you received a promotion while working at a firm/company, indent each position instead of making it appear that you started a new company and role. This will highlight your promotion instead of appearing to have switched companies.
- Add the area(s) of law you worked in during each position.
- Be sure to list the Month and Year of the start and end dates for each position.

Tip No. 6: Skills

Highlight your relevant skills and competencies that are applicable to the job you're applying for. This can include technical skills, software proficiency, language proficiency, soft skills, and any specialized training or certifications.

Tip No. 7: Naming your Resume

A professional example is 'Crystal Cornett Resume'. Many times, I receive resumes titled, 'Feb 2024 Resume', and these can get lost when searching if your full name is not included in the document title.

Tip No. 8: Cover Letter

Create a cover letter to accompany your resume. Sometimes you are only allowed to upload one document when applying for positions online, therefore, you may want to consider combining your cover letter and resume into one document. If you do this, be sure to name your document accordingly. For example, 'Crystal Cornett Resume and Cover Letter.'

Do not use AI to create your cover letter! Most hiring managers can easily detect AI in cover letters and if written personally, your cover letter could be used as a writing sample.

Tip No. 9: LinkedIn

LinkedIn has become a very popular tool for hiring managers and is linked to recruiter software. Below are some highly recommended suggestions.

- Add a professional headshot to your LinkedIn profile. Some hiring managers will bypass candidates without a headshot.
- Be sure that each company name and start/end dates mirror what is listed on your resume.
- If actively seeking a new position, change your profile to 'Open to Finding a New Job'.
- The About Section of LinkedIn should be used as a cover letter and include a summary of your education, experience, skills, software, and/or what you are seeking in a new position.
- Add the area of law you worked in during each position. A good tip for this would be to edit your position and press the "Add Skill" button to add the area of law for each position. You can add things such as "Trial Preparation, Litigation, Bankruptcy Law, etc.

Other Red Flags

Always be honest on your resume. I find a lot of candidates try to hide or lie about information on their resume, and this could be detrimental when choosing a candidate with similar skills who is truthful about any downfalls.

Below are a few Red Flags that I see on a regular basis. You may think it could be a good idea to hide your flaws, but those who interview on a regular basis can see right through these.

- A lot of movement on your resume. If you move from job to job often, this is not a great sign. This is a red flag to a hiring manager, and this could be from a variety of reasons from not getting along with others, not being able to perform the job duties, etc. If you have a lot of movement on your resume for good reason, you may want to consider adding reasoning such as:
 - Reason for leaving: Laid off due to company restructuring; or
 - Reason for leaving: Temporary/Contract Position.
- Only including the year on the start and end dates of each position. For example, if you list you worked at a position from 2018 to 2019, this could mean either January 2018 to December 2019, or December 2018 to January 2019 and could appear to be deceiving.
- Not adding the year that degrees were earned, or not completing your degree. If you did not complete the degree, you may want to list how many semester hours were completed towards your degree, or your anticipated graduation date.

- The positions or start and end dates are not mirrored with the information on LinkedIn.

Example Paralegal Resume:

Jane Doe, CP

Houston, Texas | 713-696-9315 | JaneDoe@gmail.com | www.linkedin.com/in/janedoe/

Career Objective

Paralegal with 9 years of experience in working in law firms in Personal Injury, Real Estate Law, and Intellectual Property Law with a strong background in litigation support eager to join a vibrant legal team. I bring expertise in legal research, document preparation, and trial support.

Education

Center for Advanced Legal Studies	Associate Degree in Paralegal Studies	2017
Certified Paralegal (CP) through National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)		2020

Skills

Litigation Support	Proficient in Microsoft Office
Bilingual in English and Spanish	Legal Research
Calendaring Deadlines	E-filing state and federal documents
Drafting Complex Legal Documents	Highly organized with attention to detail
Software (Clio, LexisNexis, Westlaw, Realativity, iManage)	Drafting Legal Memos
Notary Public, State of Texas, Commission Expires January 1, 2026	Trial Preparation

Professional Experience

Jones Law Firm

January 2019 – Present

Intellectual Property Litigation Paralegal
Houston, Texas

- Managing court filings and procedures for intellectual property litigation cases, including electronic filing, service of process, and compliance with local rules and procedures.
- Drafting and preparing legal documents for intellectual property litigation, such as pleadings, motions, discovery requests, responses, and briefs, ensuring accuracy and compliance with court rules.
- Assisting attorneys with trial preparation tasks, including preparing trial exhibits, witness lists, deposition summaries, and trial notebooks, and coordinating trial logistics.

John Doe Law Firm

January 2016 – January 2019

Houston, Texas

Real Estate Litigation Paralegal

December 2017 – January 2019

- Assisting attorneys with all aspects of real estate litigation case management, including organizing case files, maintaining electronic databases, and tracking deadlines related to litigation matters.
- Conducting comprehensive legal research on real estate law, including property rights, landlord-tenant law, land use and zoning regulations, and contract disputes. Assist with discovery process.

Legal Assistant

January 2016 – December 2017

- Performing general administrative tasks such as answering phones, managing calendars, scheduling appointments, drafting correspondence, and handling incoming and outgoing mail.
- Assisting with meeting and deposition preparation by organizing materials, scheduling witnesses, preparing exhibits, and coordinating logistics.

Square Law Firm

November 2015 – January 2016

Personal Injury Legal Assistant
Houston, Texas
Temporary Assignment

- Assisting attorneys with case management tasks such as organizing case files, maintaining electronic and physical records, and tracking deadlines and court appearances.

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Bachelor of Arts: Law and Business

"This bachelor's degree program is designed specifically to allow paralegals and other legal professionals to enhance and advance their careers."

Students at **Center for Advanced Legal Studies** enroll in paralegal programs because they are interested in law and desire to pursue or advance their paralegal or related careers. This has been, and remains, the primary mission of CALS since its founding in 1987. However, many students recognize the benefits of earning a higher level degree after completing their **paralegal certificate** or **associate degree**.

The **Bachelor of Arts: Law and Business** provides students with the additional knowledge and skills required to further their chosen careers. Whether they seek to enhance their existing paralegal career, qualify for jobs that require a 4-year degree, or want to pursue opportunities in the business sector, this program can help promote many professional objectives.

Designed for Graduates of Paralegal Programs

Whether you are a graduate of Center for Advanced Legal Studies or another accredited paralegal program, this bachelor's degree program has been designed for you!

Students begin where their previous studies ended by transferring in prior credits from their paralegal certificate or degree program and then taking only those courses necessary to satisfy the bachelor's degree requirements. Combined with their previous paralegal education, graduates of this bachelor's degree program will be well-prepared for future career options and opportunities.

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Accreditation, Memberships & Associations

ACCSC Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges



Council on Occupational Education¹



Higher Education Coordinating Board



Texas Workforce Commission



Texas Veterans Commission

AJPE American Association for Paralegal Education



National Federation of Paralegal Associations



National Association of Legal Assistants



Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas

¹ Council on Occupational Education, 7840 Roswell Road, Building 300, Suite 325, Atlanta, GA 30350, Telephone: 770-396-3898 / FAX: 770-396-3790, www.council.org

Curriculum

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Core Occupational Courses (42 hours)

Introduction to Law and Ethics
 Criminal Law and Procedure
 Legal Research and Writing
 Civil Procedure
 Personal Injury
 Corporate and Business Law
 Family Law
 Real Estate
 Computers and the Law
 Contracts
 Introduction to Business
 Accounting Principles
 Business Communication
 Management

Law Elective Courses* (18 hours)

Interviewing and Investigation
 Wills, Trusts and Probate
 Intellectual Property
 E-Discovery
 Immigration Law
 Advanced Civil Procedure
 Advanced Research and Writing
 Oil and Gas Law
 Administrative Law
 Bankruptcy Law
 Legal Ethics
 Employment Law
 Constitutional Law and Civil Liberties

Business Elective Courses* (12 hours)

Marketing
 Business Ethics
 Human Resources
 Finance
 Project Management
 International Business

Additional Electives (12 hours)

Students complete the degree requirement by selecting 4 additional law or business electives from those listed above.

Other Required Courses (6 hours)

Introduction to Criminal Justice
 Criminology

Required General Education (30 hours)

English Composition I
 English Composition II
 Introduction to Sociology
 Introduction to Speech Communication
 Contemporary Mathematics
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 American Government I
 Anatomy & Physiology I
 Principles of Economics
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* Electives subject to availability

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Learning Resources	1,980.00

TOTAL \$45,660.00

† Tuition and fees are reduced with transfer credit. For example, graduates of CALS' associate degree program can complete the bachelor's degree in 20 months with tuition and fees of \$22,880. Graduates of other accredited programs are encouraged to contact admissions and request a complete degree plan. Please be prepared to provide official college transcripts for all courses to be considered.



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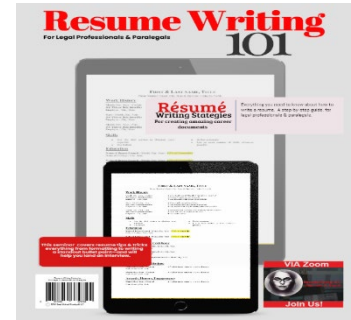


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Paralegals: Need a Resume?

By: Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP

On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC



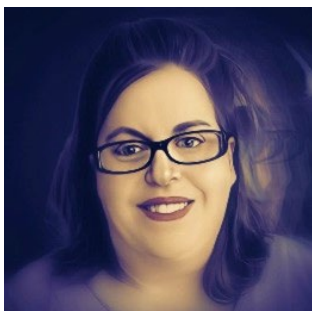
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- LinkedIn Reviews
- Resume & Cover Letter Writing Services
- Resume & Job Searching Coaching
- Resume Review & Critique/Redlined Editing/Resume Writing Workshops



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP is the founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (BVParalegal). Holly is currently the President of the New York City Paralegal Association. She has worked as legal consultant, paralegal, & certified coach in multiple disciplines since 1990. Holly has been an affiliate contributor & expert with Paralegals Connect since 2020. Holly is currently accepting new clients who want to build & grow successful legal careers. Contact Holly at (717) 747.3588 text/voice | [LinkedIn](#) | @bvparalegal on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn & Instagram <https://lnk.bio/Bvparalegal> | [Holly's links and Biz Card](#)

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- Do you struggle with proofreading and formatting your resume?
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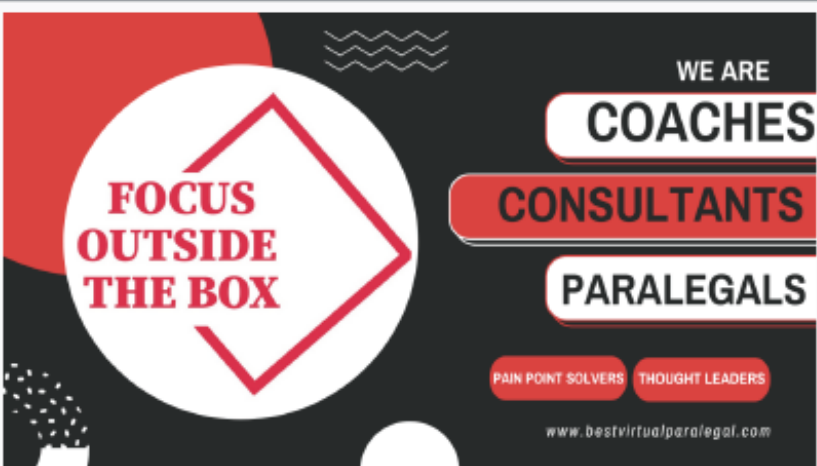
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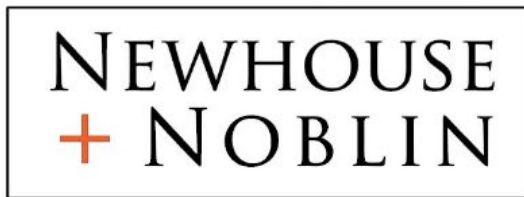
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