

# PARALEGALS CONNECT

First Quarter \*

FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER \*

Volume No. 7

## Inside This Issue:

### Page 2

What is Paralegals Connect?

### Page 3

Meet our Admins

### Page 4-5

Meet our Affiliates

### Page 6-7

Is the Job Right for You?  
5 Must-Ask Questions  
By: Tami Riggs

### Page 8-9

Interviewing Kira Muren,  
Admin of Paralegals Connect

### Page 10-11

On-Demand Service Gives  
Paralegals Instant Access to  
Thousands of Qualified Court  
Reporters  
By: Lucas Peterson

### Page 12

The Ontario Paralegal Structure  
By: Jeffrey Smith

### Page 15

You Just Got a Raise!  
By: Johnathan Bell



Meet Kira Muren,  
Admin of  
Paralegals Connect

# WHAT IS PARALEGALS CONNECT?

*“Our Groups are  
Accelerating Paralegals,  
Future Paralegals, and  
Future Attorneys  
Worldwide”*

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 **17,120+ combined active members worldwide**. We have become the largest paralegal networking group worldwide!



## 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 where you can post questions about your legal studies.

## Virtual/Freelance Paralegals Connect

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

A group designed for Virtual and/or 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

These are the busy women behind the scenes of Paralegals Connect. We are working hard to make these professional successful groups, and creating ideas to help paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys become a legal success!



## Crystal Cornett

Founder of Paralegals Connect. Crystal has been a Paralegal since 2004. She earned her first Paralegal Certificate from University of Houston in March 2006.

Crystal received the degree of Associate of Applied Science from the Center for Advanced Legal Studies and her second Paralegal Certificate in 2010. She is a member of the Lambda Epsilon Chi National Honor Society for Paralegal / Legal Assistant Studies (LEX).

Crystal currently practices Real Estate Law in Houston, Texas. Crystal also serves on the Paralegal Advisory Committee (PAC) for Center for Advanced Legal Studies.



## Eunice Colón

Eunice has been a paralegal since 2003. Eunice has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and in Spanish from the University of Houston.

Eunice is also the owner of a hand-made jewelry business, and she has extensive experience in creating and running Facebook Groups and websites.

Eunice currently practices Real Estate Law in Houston, Texas.



## Kira Muren

Kira Muren joined the Paralegals Connect admin team in 2018. She has been working as a civil litigation paralegal in Frederick, Maryland since 2013.

Kira has her associate degree in Paralegal Studies and is working on her Bachelor's in business administration at Frostburg State University.

In addition to work and school, Kira also currently serves on the Paralegal Advisory Committee (PAC) for Frederick Community College.



## Amanda DeVincenzo

Amanda DeVincenzo is a freelance virtual paralegal and career coach. Her 20+ years of experience spans paralegal, administrative, and technical roles in the private and public sectors. She has worked with such agencies as Oregon Judicial Department and U.S. Attorney's Office.

Amanda earned her A.S. and Certificate in Paralegal Studies from Southwestern College.

She also holds her M.A. in Public Policy & Administration from Northwestern University, B.A. in Sociology from University of Oregon, and A.A. in Journalism from Southwestern College.

Currently, Amanda runs her own virtual paralegal services business and offers career coaching for paralegal entrepreneurs looking to start or scale their virtual business.

# MEET OUR AFFILIATES

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 throughout the US, and large firms throughout the US. Becoming an Affiliate with our groups offers world-wide visibility to approximately **17,120+ combined group members** in the legal industry.

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



Paralegals Connect is always looking for Affiliates 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 with Paralegals Connect please contact [Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com](mailto:Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com) for additional information or visit <http://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.

[www.Paralegal.edu](http://www.Paralegal.edu)

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.



PARALEGAL.EDU  
 ★ ★ ★  
 CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES

## CobbleStone Software

CobbleStone Software provides award-winning contract management software, Contract Insight®, to simplify and automate contract tracking and management for legal professionals. CobbleStone's software provides a centralized repository for one-click contract access, unlimited document storage, easy searching and reporting, advanced reporting, proactive key-date alerts, online contract calendar, in-system collaboration, desktop and mobile access, and much more to take the stress out of contract administration. Contact CobbleStone today for a free demo or trial system at

<https://www.cobblestonesoftware.com/paralegals>



## [Expedite](#)

Uberizing the Legal Industry! Expedite is an on-demand mobile app platform, available in Apple and Android, that saves the day with those “Monday-morning emergencies” where attorneys/paralegals realize they have forgotten to order a court reporter for a hearing/trial or a videographer for a deposition. (Web-based platform now available)

Utilizing GPS-smartphone technology, [Expedite](#) provides instant access to a reliable network of court reporters, videographers, and interpreters in the immediate vicinity. Once you’ve selected the service, location and time required, providers in the area will receive an instant notification that someone needs assistance. It’s that easy.

Download Expedite from the App Store, Google Play, Web-Based Portal, and visit our website, [www.Expedite.legal](http://www.Expedite.legal), to learn more. Get back to managing your calendar more effectively with Expedite!



### [Harness the Power of Expedite!](#)

1. **Find Providers Fast** - Find available legal service providers in your immediate vicinity in just a few clicks. Schedule on-demand or book in advance.
2. **Track Arrival** - Communicate with the Provider through Expedite and track their arrival to your location.
3. **Expedite does the rest** - Appearance fees paid directly through Expedite. Invoices conveniently stored in the app. Order transcripts instantly through the app.

## [Streamlined.legal](#)

Stop putting out fires and start building your firm! [streamlined.legal](#) delivers peace of mind by helping you create efficiency in your daily workflows and optimize your use of practice management software. Our team has been there and done that. Work smarter. Get streamlined.

[www.streamlined.legal](http://www.streamlined.legal)



## [LawShelf Educational Media](#)

*[A Project of National Paralegal College](#)*

Become a LawShelf insider and you’ll receive access to all our current and future video-courses. Learn anytime from any computer or mobile device. Video-courses were developed by our expert attorneys and are comprehensive and up to date. You will receive a digital badge for each video-course you complete!

<https://lawshelf.com/>



Our mission is to provide high-quality videos and articles to help people learn about the law.

## [DeVincenzo Consulting](#)

*[Work Your Passions & Live Your Dreams](#)*

DeVincenzo Consulting provides virtual paralegal/administrative services, legal software training, and operations consulting to attorneys and boutique law firms. DeVincenzo Consulting also offers life and business coaching for paralegal entrepreneurs looking to start or scale their virtual paralegal business.

[info@DeVincenzoConsulting.com](mailto:info@DeVincenzoConsulting.com)

[www.facebook.com/DeVincenzoConsulting/](https://www.facebook.com/DeVincenzoConsulting/)



**DeVincenzo Consulting**  
Virtual Paralegal Services | Career Coaching

# Is the Job Right for You?

## 5 Must-Ask Questions!

By: Tami Riggs



**In any job search you will be screened, judged, and measured against other applicants. Employers want the ideal candidate, the perfect addition, and the right fit.**

They are sizing you up – looking for standout traits, specific qualities, education, and experience which demonstrate you are capable of performing the duties assigned to a particular role. Seek out any career counseling professional, recruiter for coaching, or conduct an internet search, and you will have unlimited access to countless training resources. They will break down the anatomy of an interview and offer suggestions for what to wear, what to bring, and how to “wow” a potential employer. Everything you need to increase your chances for success and not tank in the process is at your fingertips.

**Being prepared for an interview is important.** Employers want to know that you are a good match for them and that you will be able to make meaningful contributions. A job offer is unlikely if you have done zero homework on the opportunity, show up late, fail to look the part, or are unable to articulate how your skills and accomplishments could translate to the role.

**It is equally important to determine whether a potential employer is a good match for YOU!** Every company will have a different organizational structure and personality. Fleshing out the nuts and bolts of a new position requires more than a review of the job description, pay scale, and benefit package.

**Use the interview as an opportunity to gauge the potential employer’s ability to meet your needs.** The meeting is as much for you as it is for them. Make note of your observations and when given the opportunity for questions, ask the ones that will help you decide whether or not to take the job if it is offered. It is important to get an overall feel for the office culture, the challenges, and the benefits of working for an organization. The interview is a two-way street and you should walk away confident in your ability to fit in and be successful.

## 5 Key Questions to ask During an Interview:

### **1. Is the position open due to an internal promotion?**

What you are trying to glean from this question is whether the company is adding jobs or if the role was recently vacated. If several people have left a position it might indicate volatility. A newly created position can be equally risky, especially if performance expectations are poorly defined, or if the company is unsure about a permanent addition to their team. However, it could also signify company growth and a great opportunity to start or advance your career. Asking this question will usually reveal if there is upward mobility or opportunities to progress within an organization.

### **2. What is your onboarding process?**

This should not be confused with orientation. What you want to know is if there is a plan to help socialize new employees and assimilate them to company policies and workflow. A deeper dive should give you information on how learning and improvement are supported. Mentorships, job shadowing, cross-departmental training, and professional development can be positive indicators that the organization places emphasis on growing their employees and retaining them long term.

### **3. What is the most important thing you would expect me to accomplish in the first 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, 6 months, and/or year?**

This question is designed to give you information on the exact goals an organization has for a role, expectations which need to be met, and results which need to be delivered. Not only will it give clues as to the workload volume and associated deadlines, but it will also provide some specific insights into what the work-life balance may look like.

#### 4. How will I receive feedback regarding my performance during the introductory period and thereafter?

Post-hire check ins and evaluations are important. They provide opportunities to review accomplishments, discuss areas where improvement is needed, set goals, and plan future actions. Employers who incorporate staff support, career development, and regular performance discussions demonstrate that they are committed to your professional growth, happiness, and success.

#### 5. Would you be able to show me around the office? Observe the physical environment.

Cluttered or dirty areas can be an indicator of company disorganization. Just like a person's appearance, the appearance of an office makes an important first impression and speaks volumes about its culture and work style. If possible, check out the meeting room, lunchroom, breakroom, and washroom. Are these areas in disarray? Often, there is a negative relationship between messiness and productivity.

Consider the greeting you receive and how employees speak to you and others. Are they open and friendly or rude and abrasive? Is their tone formal or informal? A warm and inviting reception by staff who are encouraged to converse and engage with you is ideal. How they interact with each other is equally important.

#### Assess employee morale and non-verbal communication.

Are employees smiling and communicating behind closed doors? Do they appear to be on task or completely overwhelmed? Non-verbal cues and body language convey important interpersonal and emotional messages about office dynamics and job satisfaction. If they are negative it can signal unspoken issues and other problems, such as slow business, inadequate staffing, or disengagement.

#### Present yourself as someone who wants a legal position.

This means showing up on time for the interview dressed appropriately with a resume that reflects your training and background. Ask questions so that you understand the role, the firm, its organizational and cultural structure and how you would be a good fit for the job. Finally, mail a thank you note after the interview.

Not only is the prospect for more jobs apparent, but as new practice areas also evolve to address emerging issues, a variety of new and different jobs are anticipated on the legal landscape. The scope of work for paralegals is expanding and the outlook is bright. Paralegals have been in high demand and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future.

#### About the Author:

Tami Riggs is Director of Outreach and Career Services at Center for Advanced Legal Studies 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.



## Interviewing Kira Muren, Admin of Paralegals Connect

**Hi Kira! Thank you for letting us interview you today. Can you tell us a little about yourself?**

*I live in Frederick, Maryland. It's a fast-growing town about an hour north of Washington, DC with a lot to do, but still a lot of small-town charm. I'm a single mom to a spunky 10-year old daughter. She's a great kid and is definitely keeping me on my toes these days. We also have a German Shepherd mix at home. My daughter is still young enough that my hobbies tend to revolve around her hobbies. She loves to run and is on her 3rd year of Girls on the Run. We do a lot of running together now and we actually ran a 5k earlier this morning. We also both love to travel and I love to cook.*

**How did you get involved with the Paralegals Connect community?**

*A few years ago, I realized I didn't have as many paralegals to connect with as I would have liked. I went looking on Facebook to see if there were any networking groups and Paralegals Connect popped up. I loved it right away. It's a great place to be able to ask questions and get new perspectives on some of the issues you deal with in the industry. There's no need for each of us to be reinventing the wheel when we can be benefitting from shared knowledge. The group has really helped me grow and learn a lot.*

*About 18 months ago, Crystal Cornett, the Paralegals Connect founder, posted looking for new admins to help run the groups. I jumped at the opportunity and I am so glad I did. The group has continued to grow so much. Our main group surpassed 10k members this summer, which is pretty incredible! I've also been fortunate to develop a pretty great relationship with each of the other admins that help make these groups possible. It's been a pretty great experience and I can't wait to see what the future holds for the Paralegals Connect community.*

**What made you want to be a paralegal?**

*Growing up, I always wanted to be an attorney. My family, of course, thought it was because I liked to argue. In reality, it's always been the digging into a case that intrigued me. When I was little, I couldn't get enough of books like Nancy Drew and Encyclopedia Brown because I loved trying to look for the hidden clues and figure out what happened. I've always liked turning things on their head and looking at it from a new perspective. Now, it's one of my favorite parts of litigation. I love getting lost in a pile of documents and following the breadcrumbs to figure out what really happened.*

*So, there's always been that passion. Life took me a different route at first though. I had my daughter really young and dropped out of school for a bit to focus on supporting her. I was waitressing and barely making ends meet when I decided to go back to school. I was researching the available programs at my local community college when I realized they had an incredibly competitive Associate of Applied Science program in legal studies. As soon as I saw that, the rest was history.*

**Where did you go to school?**

*I went to Frederick Community College in Frederick, Maryland. Their legal studies program is amazing and a real front runner in our area. The program manager, Dr. Tracy Parker, cares so much about her students and the program. She became a mentor to me throughout my time at FCC and she really helped me become the paralegal I am today. She invited me back to serve on the advisory committee for the program, which has been a real honor. The program has grown a lot and I love the direction it's taking. There's currently a certificate program, an associate degree program, and can be used as a pre-law program as a pathway to law school.*



*Recently with the support of the Maryland State Bar Foundation, the Circuit Court for Frederick County, Bar Association for Frederick County, and the Frederick Community College Foundation, the students participated in a year long grant funded program to improve access to justice for pro se litigants with family law cases.*

*Currently, I'm working on my bachelor's in business administration at Frostburg State University. I'm attending one of their satellite campuses in Hagerstown, Maryland, which has made going back to school while working incredibly convenient. I plan to graduate in May 2020.*

### How are you balancing work, school and motherhood?

*It gets chaotic, for sure, but time management is everything. I definitely have to live by a schedule to make it all work. I think one of the most important things is making sure I still set aside family time and time for myself. You have to give yourself time to regroup, otherwise you're going to be trying to pour from an empty cup. I'm also very fortunate to have a job that's flexible, and a daughter that is an amazing help around the house.*

### Are you a certified paralegal?

*No, not right now, but I'm considering starting the process after I complete my bachelor's. I've always been conflicted on whether I should get certified as it isn't a requirement in the field and most firms tend to focus on experience. As I mentioned though, the field is rapidly evolving so I'd like to stay competitive. I think it would also help keep me proactive on keeping up with trends and taking my CLEs. And besides, who doesn't want a chance to add a couple extra letters after their name?*

### Have you thought about going to law school?

*I have! Hasn't everyone in the legal industry? But I honestly don't know what route I want to take. I love law, but right now, I love the role that I fill as a paralegal. Our industry is also rapidly evolving. Some states are starting to allow non-lawyers that are licensed as legal technicians advise clients on less abstract legal issues. I think this is a great shift. There are a lot of people that need help navigating the courts and understanding the process, but the size of their case doesn't justify hiring an expensive lawyer. It's really created a hole within the judicial process, and I think limited license legal technicians are an excellent solution. This is a shift that I'm following and if Maryland follows suit, I would love to become licensed. Anything that makes legal assistance more available to the average person is a win to me.*

### What is your favorite part about being a paralegal?

*Seeing our clients win. I work in litigation, where the cases can be long, expensive, and exhausting. The entire process can get overwhelming at times for the client. Anyone in litigation knows that watching that pendulum shift back and forth during litigation and trial is certainly not for the faint of heart. So, there is nothing better than seeing a client's face when a verdict comes back in their favor. It makes all the long hours that were put into the case worth it.*

*I also mentioned earlier how much I love digging through the documents of a case to figure out the full story. Cases always start so abstract. It's invigorating to watch it start to come together as a solid case and argument. I'm a researcher by nature, so I love digging to see what else we can find to add to the case.*

### Do you have a least favorite part?

*There's always going to be days that require repetitive work, such as drafting 20 different subpoenas or formatting a mountain of documents for a discovery deadline. Those days aren't my favorite, but I still respect that they are an important part of the job.*

### Is there any advice that you would give to anyone just starting out in the field?

*Never stop learning! There is so much information out there that can be used to further your career. Network with the people in your field, read blogs, read all the cases at your firm, take CLEs, and don't be afraid to ask questions. You should always be focused on growing and improving as a professional.*

*If you're having trouble finding a job as a paralegal, I always recommend taking time to volunteer at a local legal aid. Primarily, because I think it's always great to give back. You have this education now and if you can use it to help others, then that's pretty great. But, also it helps add experience to your resume and allows you to network within your community.*



## On-Demand Service Gives Paralegals Instant Access to Thousands of Qualified Court Reporters

By: Lucas Peterson, Paralegal and Chief Strategy Officer of Expedite

**THERE'S NO QUESTION: A PARALEGAL'S ROLE IS STRESSFUL AND ALLOWS NO MARGIN FOR ERROR.**

Fortunately, modern advances in technology can help streamline antiquated processes, thereby saving significant time, money, and precious time on an incredibly backlogged court docket. In August of 2019, I stumbled across the mobile app, [Expedite](#), completely by chance. This game-changing technology blew me away, and I knew I had to share my experience with my colleagues.

As a Paralegal with over eight years of experience in immigration law, criminal defense, and civil litigation, I have learned that efficient time management is a key component to being that "five-star" Paralegal. At any moment, we can be working on multiple things with pressing deadlines and they are ALL a priority to every client. Thus, I am constantly looking for any way to streamline processes to save time.

**Finding a court reporter for a last-minute request is almost impossible.** Finding a court reporter for a scheduled hearing or deposition can take hours, sometimes even days. It requires multiple phone calls, emails, voice messages, along with consistent tracking and follow-up. There had to be a better way!

That's when I discovered [Expedite](#), an on-demand mobile app platform, available in Apple and Android, that instantly connects paralegals with court reporters through GPS-smartphone technology. They also have an accompanying web-based platform at [www.expedite.legal](http://www.expedite.legal) so anyone, anywhere, anytime can access the service from any device.

**Expedite offers the most competent court reporters available in their respective markets.** They do this by capitalizing on the latest available mobile technologies, properly vetting their members, incorporating a reciprocal five-star rating system, providing pop-up notifications, utilizing instant communication features, and monitoring transactions within the app.

**Expedite's mission is to eliminate inefficiencies in the legal industry, and the goal is to increase productivity and profitability for everyone.** Expedite is disrupting the legal industry much like Uber disrupted the transportation industry, by offering a real-time solution through an on-demand platform.

**Need a court reporter for a deposition next Tuesday?** Easy. Open the app, and within a couple of clicks, your request is sent out to dozens of available court reporters in your requested area!

**What if your case settles the day before your scheduled service?** Easy. Open the app and cancel the job. A notice will then be sent to you, as well as the court reporter, documenting that the service has been cancelled. And as long as it's within two hours before the start of any service, there are no cancellation fees. **Simple, easy, fast, and incredibly efficient.**

And because [Expedite's](#) founder and CEO is a court reporter with 21 years' experience in the legal industry as a court reporting firm owner, all the nuances that go along with the acquisition and scheduling process have been automated.

[Expedite](#) recently announced a partnership with Clio – the world's leader in cloud-based case management software. **Now Clio users can schedule court reporters for depositions and hearings within Clio.** The software will also automatically schedule any service within Clio's calendar without any additional entry, which makes using [Expedite](#) with Clio seamless!

The long and short of it is this: [Expedite](#) was designed for those progressive business professionals who know how to capitalize on technology to work smarter rather than harder. Download and sign up today and harness the power of NOW! Your gift to yourself in 2020.

Article written by [Lucas Peterson](#), Paralegal and Chief Strategy Officer of [Expedite](#).

**Expedite** can be found at the AppStore for iPhones and GooglePlay for Android devices.

Please visit [www.expedite.legal](http://www.expedite.legal) and watch a few quick, yet fun, tutorials! Follow Expedite on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram.



# The Ontario Paralegal Structure

By: Jeffrey Smith

**The Law Society of Ontario began licensing paralegals as independent representatives in 2007.**<sup>1</sup> This was not a major shift. In fact, paralegals had been independent advocates for people well before the licensing came about. Formerly, paralegals were known as “court agents.” In order to become licensed an applicant must have a college diploma and must also pass a full day examination and a comprehensive background check.

**Paralegals in Ontario are licensed by the same body that licenses lawyers.** This has not been without significant controversy. Paralegals are regulated by their competition, which by its very nature restricts our practice to highly defined areas and often areas which aren’t appealing to lawyers to begin with. We are bound by the exact same rules and the exact same standards as lawyers when practicing within our scope.

Our role is expected to further develop with paralegals being able to act as notaries and take on family law matters. Although not confirmed, I believe the next step would also be for paralegals to accept and take on “legal aid matters.” Legal aid, for those who aren’t familiar with it, is a government funded service that pays for lawyers to represent clients in certain matters.

There have been issues with paralegals practicing out of scope, non-payment of fees, and a few non-competence issues from paralegals who have been grandfathered into the practice. Most of the convictions against paralegals by the Law Society Tribunal seem to be for violating rules that restrict our practice or our advertising, but not very many wherein competence is the heart of the issue.

Paralegals are currently licensed to appear at any board, agency, or tribunal in Ontario. Under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*,<sup>2</sup> we can represent before the federal tribunal, although the Law Society of Ontario is of the position we can’t represent fully at the Immigration and Refugee Board. This issue will be resolved through the courts at some later juncture and is much more complicated than I described in the previous sentence.

Paralegals can also appear at any matter under the *Provincial Offences Act*<sup>3</sup>, and for a whole host of *Criminal Code*<sup>4</sup> offences, when the prosecution is proceeding summarily (almost like a misdemeanor), and on cases that are proceeding in the Small Claims Court, which hears matters up to \$35,000.00. The rule of thumb is if a matter is being heard at the Ontario Court of Justice, generally speaking, we can appear there.

Our representation is full representation and includes selecting the forms, drafting the pleadings, and running the trials.

A full list of approved criminal offences, can be found at:

<https://lso.ca/about-lso/legislation-rules/permitted-criminal-code-summary-conviction-offence>.

**Paralegals who don’t practice fully independently will work under lawyers as a law clerk.** This is more analogous to the American version of a paralegal. A paralegal working under a lawyer can take on a murder case, a family law matter, or any other matter, up to, but not including appearing at court - except with some exceptions when appearing as an agent for their lawyer. In many cases, paralegals will work both as a paralegal and as a law clerk for a law office. So, for example, if a client comes in with a small claims matter, the law firm and the client can experience considerable savings by having the paralegal take care of the matter and run the trial. Many colleges offer a double diploma option enabling students earn a diploma as a law clerk and as a paralegal.

**We provide a tremendous access to justice for our clients.** We can often put in twice the amount of work than a lawyer to represent and defend someone. Our criminal scope is mostly poverty related crimes. Our Provincial Offences Act is comprised mostly traffic tickets, and our civil litigation is small claims. We work with the most marginalized members of our community. It is my hope that America will adopt a similar model so that people aren’t “priced out” from the justice system. It is also my hope that in Ontario and throughout Canada we will garner more respect and trust from the judiciary and be permitted in a wider array of matters.

## About the Author:

[Jeffrey Smith](#) is a licensed paralegal, licensed by the Law Society of Ontario, having graduated in 2019. Jeffrey has a background in police foundations, private investigations, regulatory complaints, several certifications in forensics and investigations, as well as some psychology training and certifications.

Jeffrey currently owns and operates a full-service paralegal office, within the province of Ontario, as JD Smith’s Legal Services, the website is [jdsmith.legal](http://jdsmith.legal)



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.paralegaledu.org/ontario/>

<sup>2</sup> Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (S.C. 2001, c. 27) Section 91 (2)

<sup>3</sup> Provincial Offences Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.33

<sup>4</sup> Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46)



# Artificial Intelligence 101:

— Introducing AI Into Contract Management —

Free Whitepaper

[CobbleStoneSoftware.com/AI-101](http://CobbleStoneSoftware.com/AI-101)

GET MY COPY!

## Transform Contract Management

Revolutionary advancements in AI are extremely advantageous to contract management solutions. In this whitepaper, you can learn how to convert static documents into dynamic assets by:



Managing Sensitive Data



Visualizing & Assessing Risk



Streamlining Data Extraction



Improving Contract Oversight



Realizing Opportunities



Identifying & Preventing Risk

Grab your copy today at [CobbleStoneSoftware.com/AI-101](http://CobbleStoneSoftware.com/AI-101) or call 866-330-0056.



**PARALEGAL.EDU**  
 CENTER FOR ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES

## Pursue your interest in law and become a paralegal.

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."

### What is a Paralegal?

- + Paralegals and legal assistants perform a variety of tasks to support lawyers, including maintaining and organizing files, conducting legal research, investigating the facts of a case, interviewing clients and witnesses, and drafting documents to file with the court.
- + Paralegals and legal assistants are found in all types of organizations, but most work for law firms, corporate legal departments, or government agencies.

### Your Success is Our Priority

- + Expect smaller classes and more attention from instructors.
- + Courses are designed to educate and prepare graduates for gainful employment.
- + Practicing attorneys and experienced paralegals teach law specialty courses.
- + Financial Aid is available for those who qualify. (**FAFSA School Code: 026047**)

### Attend Class Online or On Campus

- + **Online** - Attend your paralegal program in a highly interactive online classroom where students can see and speak with their professor and classmates in real-time. Attend classes 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.

### Secure 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.
- + **Employer Connections** - Leverage our relationship with hundreds of law firms and employers.
- + **Externships Available** - Gain real world experience before you graduate.

### Accreditation, Memberships & Associations

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Council on Occupational Education   | American Association for Paralegal Education  |
| Higher Education Coordinating Board | National Federation of Paralegal Associations |
| Texas Workforce Commission          | National Association of Legal Assistants      |
| Texas Veterans Commission           | 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

Professional . Prestigious . Paralegal

paralegal.edu . 1-800-446-6931

## You Just Got a Raise!

By: Johnathan Bell

### DID YOU REALIZE THAT YOUR PARALEGAL CERTIFICATE OR PARALEGAL PRACTICE JUST BECAME A BIT MORE VALUABLE?

On December 4, 2019, the **ABA** issued a formal opinion that directly affects the value of your work. The ABA, in **Formal Opinion 489**, indicated that clients are not property and when an attorney moves from one firm to another or even out on their own, the old firm must allow the client to choose whether he goes with the attorney, stays with the firm, or finds new representation altogether. Further, the former firm cannot withhold resources from the client either. The ethics rules do not allow non-competition clauses in partnership or employment agreements.

#### How does this affect your value to a firm or attorney?

Attorneys will be encouraged to start their own firms much more frequently than before. Departing attorneys won't necessarily have to start from scratch and can afford to hire skilled paralegals when they start their new firm.

Attorneys will have the ability to negotiate higher pay to remain with the current firm. In order to keep key associates, firms will have to pay their associates more if they cannot prevent the associates from leaving with existing clients. This will directly affect the paralegals as law firms will seek to be more reliant upon paralegals than associates, due to the risks associated with their departure and the increased expense. Further, since key paralegals can exit with an attorney, compensation may increase for top paralegals as well. Either way, firms will want to keep their key personnel happier, especially their top paralegals.

Law firms will be more dependent upon paralegals for client support. One strategy to keep your clients from leaving with a key associate is to have your top paralegals work with those clients through a principal or partner. The principal or partner will need greater paralegal support to avoid relying upon associates as a client contact.

#### Independent paralegals have an added marketing advantage.

While it is a very delicate conversation and I do not recommend you state this directly, an independent paralegal can't walk out the door with the firm's clients. Hence, as you negotiate your relationship with a firm, this is important to know and important that its communicated, albeit, delicately.

So, celebrate the small wins. If you decide to share this ruling, tread lightly and don't upset anyone. While it helps you in some ways, it could potentially undermine the stability of a firm. Additionally, there are often raw feelings when associates leave and start their own firms. Partners may feel that the associates are stealing their clients, while the associates feel that they have earned the trust and business of those clients. Plus, since many associates make between \$60K - \$120K per year (about \$30 - \$60 per hour) and have tremendous law school debt to manage, it is very easy for them to look at the billing rates of \$225 - \$325 per hour as a significant pay raise. You have to find the right place and the right time to share this information if you decide to share it at all. Many attorneys are not yet aware of this opinion.

More importantly, however, just be great at what you do! Become an expert in your space and know your worth. Your value will continue to increase exponentially.

I have posted a link to the Formal Opinion below.

American Bar Association, Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility. (2019). **Formal Opinion 489**, Obligations Related to Notice When Lawyers Change Firms. Retrieved from:

[https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2019/12/aba\\_formal\\_opinion\\_489.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2019/12/aba_formal_opinion_489.pdf)

### About the Author:

Johnathan Bell is an independent Foreclosure Defense and Bankruptcy paralegal serving multiple attorneys and law firms in New York and Connecticut. He is a member of the New York City Paralegal Association, and he believes paralegals are the backbone of the legal profession. Sometimes he thinks he is funny and could have made a living as a stand-up comedian. His wife disagrees.



This Newsletter was made possible by the  
Affiliates of Paralegals Connect. Thank you!

We also want to thank our writers who  
contributed to make our Newsletter a success.



Sign up to receive our Quarterly Newsletter by visiting:

<http://www.ParalegalsConnect.com/Newsletter.html>

If you are interested in writing an article for our upcoming newsletters, receiving printed copies of our Newsletter for your school or firm, or becoming an Affiliate with Paralegals Connect, please e-mail Crystal Cornett at [Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com](mailto:Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com) for additional information.