

LEGAL ASSISTANT TECHNOLOGY

Legal assistants do a variety of tasks to support lawyers, including maintaining and organizing files, conducting legal research and drafting documents.

- Legal Assistant Technology AAS Degree (<https://coursecatalog.tvcc.edu/pathways/business-technology/legal-assistant-technology/legal-assistant-technology-aas/>)
- Legal Assistant Technology Certificate (<https://coursecatalog.tvcc.edu/pathways/business-technology/legal-assistant-technology/legal-assistant-technology-certificate/>)

ACNT-1303. Introduction to Accounting I. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. A study of analyzing, classifying, and recording business transactions in a manual and computerized environment. Emphasis on understanding the complete accounting cycle and preparing financial statements, bank reconciliations, and payroll.

BCIS-1305. Business Computer Applications. (3 Credits)

(3-2-4) CORE AREA 090 This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Students will study computer terminology, hardware, and software related to the business environment. The focus of this course is on business productivity software applications and professional behavior in computing, including word processing (as needed), spreadsheets, databases, presentation graphics, and business-oriented utilization of the Internet. Lab fee.

BUSI-2301. Business Law. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. The course provides the student with foundational information about the U.S. legal system and dispute resolution, and their impact on business. The major content areas will include general principles of law, the relationship of business and the U.S. Constitution, state and federal legal systems, the relationship between law and ethics, contracts, sales, torts, agency law, intellectual property, and business law in the global context.

LGLA-1219. Paralegal Ethics. (2 Credits)

(2-2-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Presents ethical and legal responsibilities as well as rules of professional responsibility a paralegal owes to the public, the court, clients, and colleagues. Includes a review of the canons and codes.

LGLA-1345. Civil Litigation. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Presents fundamental concepts and procedures of civil litigation including pretrial, trial, and post-trial phases of litigation and emphasizes paralegal's role in civil litigation.

LGLA-1353. Wills, Trusts, and Probate Administration. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Fundamental concepts of the law of wills, trusts, and probate administration emphasizing the paralegal's role.

LGLA-1355. Family Law. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Fundamental concepts of family law including formal and informal marriages, divorce, annulment, marital property, and the parent-child relationship with emphasis on the paralegal's role in family law.

LGLA-1380. Coop Education, Paralegal/Legal Assistant. (3 Credits)

(3-1-20) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Career-related activities encountered in the student's area of specialization offered through an individualized agreement among the college, employer, and student. Under the supervision of the college and the employer, the student combines classroom learning with work experience. Includes a lecture component. Lab fee.

LGLA-1407. Introduction to Law and the Legal Professions. (4 Credits)

(4-4-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Overview of the law and the legal professions including legal concepts, systems, and terminology; substantive areas of law and the federal and state judicial systems; ethical obligations and regulations; professional trends and issues with emphasis on the paralegal's role..

LGLA-2305. Interviewing and Investigating. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. A study of techniques used to locate, gather, document, and manage information with emphasis on developing interview and investigative skills, and the paralegal's role in interviewing and investigating legal matters.

LGLA-2307. Law Office Management. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Fundamentals of principles and structure of management, administration, and substantive systems in the law office including law practice technology as applied to paralegals.

LGLA-2313. Criminal Law and Procedure. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Fundamental concepts of criminal law and procedure from arrest to final disposition including principles of federal and state law emphasizing the role of the paralegal in the criminal justice system.

LGLA-2380. Coop Education, Paralegal/Legal Assistant. (3 Credits)

(3-1-20) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Career-related activities encountered in the student's area of specialization offered through an individualized agreement among the college, employer, and student. Under the supervision of the college and the employer, the student combines classroom learning with work experience. Includes a lecture component. Lab fee.

POFI-2301. Word Processing. (3 Credits)

(3-2-4) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Word processing software focusing on business applications. Lab fee.

POFL-1305. Legal Terminology. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. An overview of legal terminology and how these terms are used in legal documents.

POFT-1301. Business English. (3 Credits)

(3-3-0) This course is taken for academic credit. Students will earn an A, B, C, D, F, or W. Introduction to a practical application of basic language usage skills with emphasis on fundamentals of writing and editing for business.

What Paralegals and Legal Assistants Do (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-2>)

Paralegals and legal assistants perform a variety of tasks to support lawyers (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/lawyers.htm>), including maintaining and organizing files, conducting legal research, and drafting documents.

Duties

Paralegals and legal assistants typically do the following:

- Investigate and gather the facts of a case
- Conduct research on relevant laws, regulations, and legal articles
- Organize and maintain documents in paper or electronic filing systems
- Gather and arrange evidence and other legal documents for attorney review and case preparation
- Write or summarize reports to help lawyers prepare for trials
- Draft correspondence and legal documents, such as contracts and mortgages
- Get affidavits and other formal statements that may be used as evidence in court
- Help lawyers during trials by handling exhibits, taking notes, or reviewing trial transcripts
- File exhibits, briefs, appeals and other legal documents with the court or opposing counsel
- Call clients, witnesses, lawyers, and outside vendors to schedule interviews, meetings, and depositions

Paralegals and legal assistants help lawyers prepare for hearings, trials, and corporate meetings.

Paralegals use technology and computer software for managing and organizing the increasing amount of documents and data collected during a case. Many paralegals use computer software to catalog documents, and to review documents for specific keywords or subjects. Because of these responsibilities, paralegals must be familiar with electronic database management and be current on the latest software used for electronic discovery. Electronic discovery refers to all electronic materials obtained by the parties

during the litigation or investigation. These materials may be emails, data, documents, accounting databases, and websites.

Paralegals' specific duties often vary depending on the area of law in which they work. The following are examples of types of paralegals and legal assistants:

Corporate paralegals, for example, often help lawyers prepare employee contracts, shareholder agreements, stock-option plans, and companies' annual financial reports. Corporate paralegals may monitor and review government regulations to ensure that the corporation is aware of new legal requirements.

Litigation paralegals maintain documents received from clients, conduct research for lawyers, retrieve and organize evidence for use at depositions and trials, and draft settlement agreements. Some litigation paralegals may also help coordinate the logistics of attending a trial, including reserving office space, transporting exhibits and documents to the courtroom, and setting up computers and other equipment.

Paralegals may also specialize in other legal areas, such as personal injury, criminal law, employee benefits, intellectual property, bankruptcy, immigration, family law, and real estate.

Specific job duties may also vary by the size of the law firm.

In small firms, paralegals' duties tend to vary more. In addition to reviewing and organizing documents, paralegals may prepare written reports that help lawyers determine how to handle their cases. If lawyers decide to file lawsuits on behalf of clients, paralegals may help draft documents to be filed with the court.

In large organizations, paralegals may work on a particular phase of a case, rather than handling a case from beginning to end. For example, paralegals may only review legal material for internal use, maintain reference files, conduct research for lawyers, or collect and organize evidence for hearings. After gaining experience, a paralegal may become responsible for more complicated tasks.

Unlike the work of other administrative and legal support staff employed in a law firm, the paralegal's work is often billed to the client.

Paralegals may have frequent interactions with clients and third-party vendors. In addition, experienced paralegals may assume supervisory responsibilities, such as overseeing team projects or delegating work to other paralegals.

SUMMARY (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm>)

- 2021 Median Pay: \$56,230 per year; \$27.03 per hour
- Typical Entry-Level Education: Associate's degree
- Work Experience in a Related Occupation: None
- On-the-job Training: None
- Number of Jobs, 2021: 352,800

- Job Outlook, 2021-31: 14% (Much faster than average)
- Employment Change, 2021-31: 49,900

Work Environment (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-3>)

Paralegals and legal assistants are found in all types of organizations, but most work for law firms, corporate legal departments, and government agencies. They usually work full-time, and some may have to work more than 40 hours a week to meet deadlines.

How to Become a Paralegal or Legal Assistant (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-4>)

Most paralegals and legal assistants have at least an associate's degree or a certificate in paralegal studies. In some cases, employers may hire college graduates with a bachelor's degree but no legal experience or specialized education and train them on the job.

Pay (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-5>)

The median annual wage for paralegals and legal assistants was \$56,230 in May 2021.

Job Outlook (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-6>)

Employment of paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow 14 percent from 2021 to 2031, much faster than the average for all occupations. About 45,800 openings for paralegals and legal assistants are projected each year, on average, over the decade.

State & Area Data (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-7>)

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for paralegals and legal assistants.

Similar Occupations (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-8>)

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of paralegals and legal assistants with similar occupations.

More Information, Including Links to O*NET (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-9>)

Learn more about paralegals and legal assistants by visiting additional resources, including O*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

SUGGESTED CITATION:

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 May 10, 2023).

TVCC has partnered with **Career Coach** (<https://tvcc.emsicc.com/?radius=®ion=10%20Mile%20Radius%20from%20Athens%2C%20TX>) for students to discover majors and in-demand careers and education based on your interests!

- Career Assessment Profiler
- Interactive Career Catalog
- Browse TVCC's Pathways

Some careers in this field will require a bachelor's degree.

- TVCC's AA degrees are fully transferable to public universities in Texas. See an academic advisor or TVCC's university transfer webpage (<https://www.tvcc.edu/Advisement/Category.aspx?z=72>) for more information on this transfer opportunity.
- Many of TVCC's AAS degrees lead to an online Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) degree with participating universities. See an academic advisor or the BAAS transfer website (<https://www.ntxccc.org/pathways/>) for more information on this transfer opportunity.