

<i>Code: 3145</i> <i>Title: PARALEGAL</i>
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SUMMARY: Performs paraprofessional legal work assisting attorneys in case preparation. Work ranges from handling routine assignments to autonomous decision making in coordinating, processing and monitoring complex and specialized legal casework.

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES: (Work assignments may vary depending on the department's needs and will be communicated to the applicant or incumbent by the manager/supervisor.)

Typical office support duties of all specializations may include:

Case Management:

Manages case load involving specialized areas of law (criminal, civil, juvenile, environmental, bankruptcy, tax, employment and domestic relations) and recommends appropriate legal action;
Compiles, coordinates and analyzes case information throughout all phases of case administration and initiates appropriate action to start legal proceedings;
Establishes case files, organizes records and documentation to monitor case activities to ensure smooth flow and monitors for compliance with legal time constraints, court procedures, legal statutes and codes;
Prepares written reports documenting investigative, case management and collection activities;
Investigates and manages assigned cases for the purpose of establishing, modifying and enforcing child support orders in accordance with federal and state laws, rules and regulations.

Discovery and Trial Preparation:

Investigates case problems, gathers, reviews and verifies case documentation for completeness and accuracy;
Reviews research, analyzes case documentation and develops recommendations for case administration;
Summarizes depositions, interviews, interrogatories and other case documents to assist attorneys with case handling;
Develops and secures evidence and documentation, coordinates court notes and exhibits for trial;
Confers with attorneys and court offices regarding court cases, trials, evidence or depositions;
Coordinates discovery activities, including the identification and compilation of all pertinent case documentation;
Assists attorneys in preparation for depositions or trials and discusses case strategies;
Reviews and analyzes documentation of prior convictions for the purposes of sentencing enhancement;
Identifies and analyzes potential sources and locations of evidentiary factual data or witnesses which may contribute or impede establishment of facts of case;
Conducts in-office investigations to gather information using various databases;
Identifies, obtains and preserves evidence or testimony;
Drafts interrogatories, requests for admission or production of documents, motions, answers, complaints and plea agreements;
Prepares witnesses, clients, or victims for deposition, interview or trial.

Legal Writing/Drafting Legal Documents:

Drafts routine and complex legal documents, motions, interrogatories, arguments, briefs, opinions, petitions, changes of plea, contracts and ordinances;
Responds to motions, discovery requests, interrogatories, petitions, plea agreements, writs and orders.

Legal Research:

Researches and conducts investigations of credit histories, locating financial data and place of residence using automated data systems and restricted access sources;
Conducts legal research through the use of computerized legal research (Lexis and Westlaw) or statutes, U.S. Constitution, legal periodicals, law reviews, digests, legal encyclopedias, codes, regional and federal reporters, slip opinions and various case law;
Updates or shepardizes case law to distinguish and analogize the case to the fact situation at hand;
Identifies applicable statutes or rules that are in force and effect for the particular matter.

Judgment and Analytical Ability:

Sets priorities relating to court procedures, work production and attorney preference;
Makes decisions regarding ethical obligations;
Analyzes and categorizes information from which facts or evidence are discerned and maintains control and retrievability of analyses of facts;
Categorizes relevant topics from which evidentiary materials and testimony relate for the basis of case;
Links facts, testimony or objects together in relationship to the issues of the case;
Reads and measures statements, reported acts or events against others and examines, studies and reviews to establish the facts or answers;
Analyzes legal problems and determines cause of action or valid defense.

Interviewing:

Conducts interviews to obtain or clarify case preparation information, prepares appropriate reports, recommendations and summaries;
Interviews and negotiates with absent parents and witnesses regarding meeting obligations;
Identifies testimonial evidence expected to be used and measures against the elements of proof in the course of the legal matter.

Communications/Attorney Liaison:

Coordinates between the County Attorney's Office and other governmental agencies to include out of state jurisdictions;
Acts as liaison for attorney to the courts, law enforcement agencies, other county departments, clients and the public;
Prepares memos and letters regarding attorney client privilege and confidential matters.

Some positions may specialize in one of the following areas:

Plans, develops and organizes all phases of work to completion;
Prioritizes sequences of work and monitors progress and follow-up;
Makes decisions and has discretionary authority for actions;
Analyzes and executes settlements and conclusions;
Uses independent judgment and is self sufficient;
Accounts for any actions to be taken regarding time lines, court actions or preparation of legal documents;
Performs all aspects of case management or administration regarding legal document analysis, case file review, legal issues and applicable legal authority in preparation of documents or actions.

Special Projects:

Coordinates special projects such as developing and implementing organizational redesign of case handling procedures.

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS:

Knowledge of:

- legal code of ethics, terminology, principles, precedents, procedures, time constraints and deadlines imposed by law;
- legal research methods;
- interviewing techniques and procedures;
- procedures and methods of discovery, disclosure, case analysis and trial preparation and assistance;
- state, civil, criminal, juvenile, domestic relations, bankruptcy, employment, environmental or probate law;
- statutes, codes and case laws in specialty area;
- rules of Court, evidence, discovery, Federal Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act and other ordinances;
- Lexis or Westlaw data information systems;
- civil and criminal procedures.

Skill in:

- word processing, automated spreadsheets, and data bases;
- analyzing case information and making effective recommendations for case administration;
- performing legal research using appropriate techniques and methods;
- drafting legal documents and documentation for legal processing;
- interviewing techniques appropriate to a legal investigation;
- understanding and applying legal terminology;
- establishing and maintaining effective working relationships;
- exercising good judgment and applying legal ethics in decision making;
- planning work to be completed within time constraints;
- communicating effectively;
- interpreting various data bases;
- organizing and prioritizing work flow.

Some positions in this classification may also require:

Knowledge of:

- management principles and practices;
- specialized areas of law.

Skill in:

- prioritizing, assigning and reviewing work of other legal assistants, legal secretaries or litigation support staff;
- training other legal secretarial or litigation support staff;
- using independent judgment and decision making;
- managing large complex case files;
- analyzing information and legal elements of proof or cause of action.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- 1) An Associates degree from an accredited college as a Paralegal or Legal Assistant.
OR:
- 2) A certificate of completion in Paralegal or Legal Assistant studies from an American Bar Association (ABA) approved program at an accredited college or university.
OR:
- 3) An Associate's, Bachelor's or Juris Doctorate degree from an accredited college or university in a related field such as law, business, legal secretary, criminal justice, political science, interdisciplinary studies, regional development, communications and 1 year of experience working in a legal setting, under direction of an attorney, performing functions consistent with paralegal or legal assistant duties.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

Physical/Sensory Requirements: Physical and sensory abilities will be determined by position.

Special Notice Items: All applicants must pass a criminal history background investigation prior to appointment.

This class specification is intended to indicate the basic nature of positions allocated to the class and examples of typical duties that may be assigned. It does not imply that all positions within the class perform all of the duties listed, nor does it necessarily list all possible duties that may be assigned.