Paralegal

About my job:
As a paralegal, or legal assistant, I perform a variety of tasks to support lawyers, including maintaining and organizing files, conducting legal research and drafting documents.

What I do every day:
- Prepare affidavits or other documents, such as legal correspondence, and organize and maintain documents in paper or electronic filing system
- Prepare for trial by performing tasks such as organizing exhibits, and assist and attend at trial
- Create initial drafts of legal documents, including briefs, pleadings, appeals, wills, contracts and real estate closing statements
- Meet with clients and other professionals to discuss details of case
- Develop initial drafts and file pleadings with court clerk
- Document notes from client meetings
- Take client phone calls to screen issues

What makes my job great?

Job growth:
In the state of Ohio, there is a projected increase of paralegal positions of 17 percent between the years of 2012-2022.

Short-term training:
Most paralegals and legal assistants have an associate 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.

Good pay:
The median salary for a paralegal in Ohio is $42,910. (That means 50 percent earn less than this number, and the other 50 percent earn more.)

Benefits:
Most paralegals and legal assistants work full time. Some may have to work more than 40 hours per week in order to meet deadlines. Benefits may include:
- Healthcare
- Paid vacation

For Sources/References: See page 04.
How can you become an paralegal?

**Academic/training credentials:**
A minimum of an associate degree in paralegal studies is usually required. A bachelor’s degree (generally not a paralegal option) can be obtained in a number of different subject areas, however, employers generally require these individuals to hold a certificate in paralegal studies.

**Skills and requirements:**
- Well-developed communication skills
- Knowledge of the English language
- Strong research skills
- Understanding of the law and government policies and procedures

**Where you can find jobs:**
- Online job boards
- Temp Services
- Local Career Fairs
- Networking
- Social Media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter)
- Department of Career Services at colleges

**Potential job titles:**
- Certified paralegal
- Immigration paralegal
- Law clerk
- Legal analyst
- Legal assistant
- Legal clerk
- Paralegal
- Paralegal specialist
- Real estate paralegal
- Summer law associate

**Potential local employers**
- Law firms
- Government agencies
- Finance and insurance agencies
Local educational opportunities

Two-year institutions:

- Lakeland Community College: Associate of Applied Business in Paralegal Studies

Four-year institutions:

- Holden University Center of Lakeland Community College/Kent State University: Bachelor of Arts in Paralegal Studies.

Coursework per educational entity:

**Secondary pathway:** Business and Administrative Services

**Postsecondary program:** Paralegal Studies

An Example of Course with Secondary and Postsecondary Credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 1st Semester</th>
<th>Year 1 2nd Semester</th>
<th>Year 2 1st Semester</th>
<th>Year 2 2nd Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Algebra</td>
<td>College Seminar</td>
<td>Intro to Paralegal Studies/Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Law Office Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Computer Applications</td>
<td>Legal Research &amp; Writing</td>
<td>Torts &amp; Contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intro to Environmental Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Advanced Legal Research</td>
<td>Civil Procedure &amp; Internship</td>
<td>Technical Elective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Family Law</td>
<td>Legal Practicum</td>
<td>Humanities Elective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High School Career-Technical Education Program Courses

High School Courses for Postsecondary Credit (Including Apprenticeship Hours) and the Corresponding Postsecondary Courses

For Sources/References: See page 04.
How can I grow my career?

Where could I focus or specialize in my career?

- Corporate paralegal
- Estate planning and probate paralegal
- Family law paralegal
- Immigration paralegal
- Intellectual property paralegal
- Litigation paralegal
- Real Estate paralegal

The career ladder

Legal Administrative Assistant
- Certificate
- $37,310 annual salary

Paralegal
- Associate degree, paralegal studies
- $42,010 annual salary

Lawyer
- Doctoral degree, law
- $94,460 annual salary

Sources/References:

O*Net Online-Summary Report, Ohio Labor Market Information
Explorethetrades.org