



PARALEGAL I/II

DEFINITION

Under immediate or general supervision, performs paraprofessional legal support work including legal research and writing, interviewing clients, preparing standard documents, and assisting in case preparation; and performs related duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives immediate or general supervision from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises no direct supervision over staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Paralegal I: This is the entry-level paraprofessional classification in the Paralegal series. Initially under immediate supervision, incumbents learn and perform routine paralegal duties. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied, complex, and difficult; close supervision and frequent review of work lessen as an incumbent demonstrates skill to perform the work independently. Positions at this level usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at the II-level, but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgment in matters related to work procedures and methods. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise.

Paralegal II: This is the fully qualified journey-level paraprofessional classification in the Paralegal series. Positions at this level are distinguished from the I-level by the performance of the full range of duties as assigned, working independently, and exercising judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit.

Positions in the Paralegal class series are flexibly staffed and positions at the II-level are normally filled by advancement from the I-level, after gaining the knowledge, skill, and experience which meet the qualifications for and after demonstrating the ability to perform the work of the higher-level class.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

- Prepares a variety of legal documents such as motions, appeals, and briefs; completes and files documents, following established procedures.
- Interviews various clients, witnesses, and others to obtain information regarding cases, eligibility, determinations, conservatorships, and other activities and functions related to the department to which assigned.
- Explains procedures, regulations, and policies to those interviewed and the public; refers individuals to other sources of information and assistance as appropriate.
- Performs legal research under the direction of an attorney; gathers information regarding laws, ordinances, regulations, court decisions, and similar materials related to assigned support area.
- Screens calls, visitors, and incoming mail; provides information to the public by phone or in person requiring an understanding of department services and County policies and procedures; listens to

questions and interprets and applies regulations, policies, procedures, systems, rules, and precedents according to existing guidelines; responds to citizen and staff inquiries and complaints; refers citizens to the appropriate department source; coordinates or resolves problems of a moderate nature when appropriate.

- Researches and downloads confidential data from varying systems.
- Reviews and scans various documents received from internal and external sources.
- Organizes, indexes, and summarizes research results, including opinions, testimony, police and probation reports, and other documents.
- Confers with investigators regarding evidence and facts.
- Responds to inquiries and provides information as appropriate to the public, other County divisions or departments, other public agencies, outside counsel, and defendants regarding cases or legal matters handled by the work unit.
- Prepares a variety of correspondence and general written materials.
- May direct the work of others on a project basis; may train others in work procedures.
- May perform the duties of a Legal Secretary on a relief basis.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Some knowledge and abilities may be gained by employees at the entry (I) level while in a learning capacity.

Knowledge of:

- Methods and techniques of legal research, discovery, fact investigation, and standard legal reference materials.
- Principles and practices of legal office terminology, processes, procedures, and the format for legal documents.
- Techniques of investigative interviewing.
- Criminal law and legal processes.
- The judicial structure.
- Recordkeeping, report preparation, and filing methods.
- Business arithmetic, including percentages and decimals.
- Principles and techniques for working with groups and fostering effective team interaction to ensure teamwork is conducted smoothly.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and County staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination.
- Computers and software programs (e.g., Microsoft software packages) to conduct, compile, and/or generate documentation.

Ability to:

- Perform legal research and writing from varied sources; identify more complex legal issues for further study.
- Prepare a variety of legal documents.
- Use initiative and sound independent judgment within established guidelines.
- Understand, interpret, and apply all pertinent laws, codes, ordinances, statutes, regulations, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to work performed.
- Organize and maintain accurate records and files.

- Conduct investigative interviews.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Effectively represent the department and the County in meetings with governmental agencies; community groups; various business, professional, and regulatory organizations; and in meetings with individuals.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Paralegal I:

In accordance with the California Business and Professions Code, Section 6450 (c), as may be amended from time to time, applicants must meet one of the following requirements:

A certificate of completion of a paralegal program approved by the American Bar Association.

OR

A certificate of completion of a paralegal program at, or a degree from, a postsecondary institution that requires the successful completion of a minimum of 24 semester, or equivalent, units in law-related courses and that has been accredited by a national or regional accrediting organization or approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education.

OR

A baccalaureate degree or an advanced degree in any subject, a minimum of one year of law-related experience under the supervision of an attorney who has been an active member of the State Bar of California for at least the preceding three years or who has practiced in the federal courts of this state for at least the preceding three years, and a written declaration from this attorney stating that the person is qualified to perform paralegal tasks.

OR

A high school diploma or general equivalency diploma, a minimum of three years of law-related experience under the supervision of an attorney who has been an active member of the State Bar of California for at least the preceding three years or who has practiced in the federal courts of this state for at least the preceding three years, and a written declaration from this attorney stating that the person is qualified to perform paralegal tasks. This experience and training shall be completed no later than December 31, 2003.

Paralegal II: In addition to the above, two (2) years of paralegal experience at a level equivalent to the County's class of Paralegal I.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain and maintain, a valid California or Nevada Driver's License and a satisfactory driving record.
- Possession of a paralegal certificate issued by an accredited paralegal program or institution is highly desirable.

Other Requirements:

- Incumbents assigned to the Paralegal class are required to meet mandatory continuing education requirements pursuant to California Law, Business and Professions Code, Section 6450(d), as may be amended from time to time.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various County and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard, typewriter keyboard, or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 25 pounds. Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with members of the public or with staff under emotionally stressful conditions while interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.