

PARALEGAL, ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE



Program Information

What is a paralegal/legal assistant?

A paralegal, also called a *legal assistant*, is a person who is qualified by education, training, or work experience; who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, government agency, or other entity; and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.

What does a paralegal do?

The lawyer delegates duties to the paralegal. These duties will depend on the individual's abilities, specialty, and/or employment. Generally, those duties will include one or more of the following categories:

- Perform legal research,
- Interview clients/witnesses and conduct investigations,
- Draft legal documents,
- Calendar and track deadlines,
- Provide litigation support,
- Assist at hearings and trials, and
- Use technology to perform tasks.

A paralegal may not provide legal services directly to the public unless specifically authorized by law.

Additional Information

Employment opportunities for the paralegal are wide ranging and numerous. There are many job opportunities for a qualified paralegal including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Private law firms (70 percent),
- Corporate legal departments,
- Insurance companies,
- Real estate agencies,
- Title companies,
- The court system,

- Trust and mortgage departments, and
- Government agencies.

Associate of Applied Science

The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Paralegal program is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA).

The Paralegal curriculum at San Jacinto College is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills required to work under the supervision of lawyers. The program provides the Paralegal student with knowledge and skills for employment in law firms, corporations, government agencies, and other legal departments.

Lambda Epsilon Chi (LEX) is the national honor society founded by the American Association for Paralegal Education. San Jacinto College Paralegal students who have completed two-thirds of the College's Paralegal program with a 3.25 overall GPA and a 3.5 legal specialty courses GPA and who demonstrate academic excellence may qualify for LEX.

Paralegal Associations

- American Bar Association (ABA)
- American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE)
- State Bar of Texas, Paralegal Division (TXPD)
- Houston Metropolitan Paralegal Association (HMPA)
- Houston Paralegal Association (HPA)

Career Opportunities

The US Department of Labor predicts the paralegal profession will grow 15 percent through the year 2026. The San Jacinto College Paralegal program enjoys more than a 90 percent success rate.

Most of the entry-level job opportunities are with private law firms from one-attorney firms to large firms. The paralegal will usually specialize in one or two areas of law, but some in general practice will work in various areas.

Corporate law departments, government agencies, and other legal departments also provide jobs for our graduates.

Paralegals pursue careers in:

- Litigation,
- Personal Injury,
- Corporate Law,
- Criminal Law,
- Employee Benefits,
- Intellectual Property,
- Bankruptcy,
- Immigration Law,
- Family Law,
- Real Estate, and
- Many other areas of law.

Internship opportunities include work for paralegals in law firms, corporate business, government agencies, real estate, insurance, and non-profit organizations.

Earning Potential

Paralegal: \$52,406 per year¹

¹ Source: texaswages.com (<http://texaswages.com>), median salary
Gulf Coast region, 2020

For more information, students may contact 281-998-6150 x7201.

Campus

North Campus