



BY BARBRI



# Paralegal Studies Career Guide

# Power Your Dynamic Career in the Legal Field

Whether you are transitioning into the legal field, looking to build on your experience or want a stepping-stone to law school, opportunities for trained paralegals have never been more prevalent. Law firms, corporations, and employers in a multitude of industries are searching for paralegals who can represent the changing face of the legal profession.

Competition among law practices is on the rise. To compete in the market, legal teams must economize their client service operations by hiring more paralegal professionals to perform duties that were once assigned to junior attorneys. In their expanding role, paralegals provide essential assistance to attorneys and businesses. As the profession also continues to adopt new technology to gain efficiencies, there are increasing opportunities for paralegals to build new technical skills to apply in the workplace.

## The Need for Paralegals Is Strong

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects the employment of paralegals to grow 14% from 2021 to 2031, much faster than the average for all other occupations. This growth will account for about 45,800 new paralegal jobs per year over the decade at a median income of \$56,230 (based on 2021 data). Law offices, corporations, hospitals, financial institutions, insurance companies, government agencies, non-profit organizations, courts, and consulting firms are all entities that employ paralegals.

### A Day In The Life of a Paralegal

A role that was once primarily administrative in nature has greatly transformed. Today's paralegal routinely performs complex, substantive legal work as the secondary point of contact for a client. Like attorneys, paralegals bill clients and generate income for their employer, in contrast to other legal support staff.

### A Paralegal Typically:

- Investigates and gathers the facts of a case
- Conducts research on relevant laws and regulations applicable to a case
- Organizes and maintains documents in paper or electronic filing systems
- Gathers evidence and other legal documents for attorney review and case preparation
- Writes or summarizes reports to help lawyers prepare for hearings, trials, or corporate meetings
- Drafts correspondence and legal documents, such as contracts and subpoenas
- Gets affidavits and other formal statements that may be used as evidence in court
- Helps lawyers during trials by handling exhibits, taking notes, or reviewing trial transcripts
- Files exhibits, briefs, appeals, and other legal documents with the court or opposing counsel
- Calls clients, witnesses, lawyers, and outside vendors to schedule interviews and depositions



Employers are increasingly shifting toward skills-based hiring and are de-prioritizing degree requirements in job openings. Most human resources leaders have already started de-emphasizing degrees in order to prioritize skill- and competency-based hiring in professions such as paralegal.

**2023 Hanover Research:** Employer Perceptions of Non-Credit Credentials

### Important Qualities of a Paralegal

Although the specific duties of a paralegal may vary depending on the area of law in which they work, there are certain qualities that are highly sought after. With the growing use of software in the legal industry, organizations often hire paralegal professionals with advanced technology and computer skills. Strong writing, interpersonal, and communication skills are also factors in hiring. And because paralegals may be responsible for many cases at one time, the ability to keep notes and research organized and detailed while adapting quickly to changing needs is important as well.

### CLS by BARBRI: The Place for Legal Education

We understand the constraints that face today's adult learners. Free time is scarce and busy people need options to balance work and life. The [CLS by BARBRI Paralegal Certificate Course](#)® is an affordable, flexible, and effective way to get the high level of competency legal teams are looking for without the commitment and cost of a traditional college program. Our cornerstone online format is a 14-week course delivered in two 7-week sessions. Other options include our Self-Study, Live Lecture, and Text Only formats.

We work with over 150 accredited colleges and universities across the country to issue our certificates.

CLS by BARBRI has been preparing paralegals for sustainable careers in the legal field for 43 years. The 75,000 certificates we've awarded to paralegals – employers value as demonstrating preparation for the real-world demands of the profession.

# What You Will Learn in The Paralegal Certificate Course<sup>©</sup>

Get ready to gain comprehensive knowledge of the American judicial system and the fundamental skills you will need to succeed as a working paralegal professional.

## Legal Research

Every legal case requires preparation and research. Perform fact-checking and conduct library searches, including computerized searches using research services and tools that are found in most law libraries and relied on extensively in law offices throughout the country.

## Legal Terminology

It's important for paralegals to understand and be able to apply legal concepts and terminology and know how to properly cite legal authority.

## Legal Writing

Paralegals are expected to effectively draft pleadings, discovery documents, legal memos, motions, and summaries of client and attorney meetings.

## Case Management/Trial Preparation

Paralegals often assist in managing pleadings, correspondence, and case files. They also help to prepare cases for trial by interviewing witnesses, preparing evidence, investigating complex facts, conducting legal analysis, and performing legal problem-solving.

## Substantive Law

To help attorneys throughout the legal process, paralegals must know the significant elements of substantive law, such as torts, contracts, criminal law, domestic relations, real property, and bankruptcy. Basic knowledge of the rules of civil procedure and evidence is also important.

## Program Features

- **Online Course:** Comprehensive 14-week curriculum comprised of **Paralegal 1** and **Paralegal 2**, each consecutive 7-week session consisting of 12 modules that cover critical legal topics and prepare students for developing expertise in state and local laws
- **Self-Study Course:** Allows students to complete the course at their own pace, within a 6-month timeframe
- **Live Lecture Course:** Offered three times per year through select partner schools for students interested in a format with more live interaction
- **Text Only Course:** Offers a traditional distance learning format
- Guided instruction or recorded video lectures (depending on the course option chosen) and, in some cases, credit hours with which to work toward a degree
- Formative assessments and interactive quizzes implemented throughout the course
- Access during the course to Westlaw, a legal research database used by many legal teams
- Direct interaction with the instructor and classmates through e-mail and a discussion board
- Receipt of a Paralegal Certificate of Completion from the student's chosen university or college upon successful completion of the course

## Gain Specialized Skills for an Emerging Trend or Area of Interest

Become an expert in your field, enhance your career prospects and earning potential, increase your efficiency and boost your personal satisfaction, all while gaining the competitive edge. You're in the driver's seat with a specialized paralegal certificate or intensive training in a certain area of law, including eDiscovery, employment law, or victim advocacy.



### Trending: eDiscovery for Paralegals

Ediscovery is a critical process in the litigation arena that involves collecting and compiling electronically stored information (ESI) for lawsuits and investigations. As more case information is sourced and stored electronically, eDiscovery is revolutionizing the way evidence is collected and used in legal proceedings and creating new career opportunities for professional development among paralegals. Paralegals who embrace eDiscovery knowledge and skills are in high demand.

### Advanced Paralegal Certificate Course

If you are a paralegal professional, expand your career possibilities with training in one or more areas of specialty law.

# Why CLS by BARBRI?



**AFFORDABLE** We believe everyone should have access to continuing legal education. Our Paralegal Certificate Course® is among the **most affordable** in the industry, and payment options are available.



**FLEXIBLE** Our Paralegal Certificate Course® is **available in a variety of formats** and open for enrollment year-round. Continue your education when it fits your schedule and where it works best for your lifestyle.



**CREDIBLE** Upon successful completion of the course, our graduates are awarded a certificate from the accredited college or university of their choice and an **official digital badge by Credly**.



**EXPERIENCED** For over 40 years, our Paralegal Certificate Course® has been **taught by practicing legal professionals** and is regularly updated to remain on pace with current industry trends.



**PROFESSIONAL** CLS by BARBRI is the leading continuing education provider in the U.S., **graduating thousands of job-ready paralegal and legal support professionals** every year.



**LEADERSHIP** We are proud to be a part of the BARBRI family of legal education companies, **the premier provider of practical legal education**.



# Career Resources

The [CLS by BARBRI Career Center](#) is available to current and former CLS students who have completed at least 60% of the Paralegal Certificate Course®. Build on your professional development with everything from greater job readiness to endless opportunities for career advancement.

- Post anonymous resumes and submit your resume for review (one time opportunity). Be recruited while remaining in complete control over which employers view your information.
- Access career resources, including a dedicated career board, in a mobile-responsive environment for an optimal experience regardless of the device you are using.
- Receive an alert every time a new job becomes available that matches your personal goals and interests.
- Gain exposure throughout the YM Careers network of nearly 2,500 niche career centers. YM Careers is the leading provider of job websites and career centers for organizations that serve specialized members.
- Access the [Legal Studies Blog](#) and free Paralegal Career Advancement Webinars to learn about the latest industry trends plus job attainment and career development for paralegals.

“ CLS allowed me to get my certificate from the comfort of my own home and I loved that I could choose which main university the certificate would be coming from as well. Thank you for the positive experience! ”

— Anna I.



## Take the Next Step

Select the school of your choice  
and enroll in the online Paralegal Certificate Course® today  
at [legalstudies.com/paralegal-certificate](https://legalstudies.com/paralegal-certificate).

Interested in a personalized consultation with an Enrollment Counselor?  
Contact us at **1-800-522-7737** (8AM–6PM CT, Monday–Friday)