

ASSISTANT PARALEGAL

A. DEFINITION

The Assistant Paralegal provides paralegal support services to staff attorneys. General duties include assisting with case preparation and file management, maintaining internal dockets or calendars, drafting routine pleadings and correspondence, maintaining research banks, performing preliminary legal research and assisting with panel training.

B. PRIMARY JOB DUTIES

The Assistant Paralegal performs tasks such as the following:

1. Performs general case preparation as directed by the Assistant Federal Defenders or paralegal staff. Assists in the maintenance of case files. Organizes and indexes discovery, evidence and exhibits for use in preparation for trial.
2. Provides research support and background investigation under the general direction of the Assistant Federal Defender or paralegal staff.
3. Participates in case management functions and control systems such as conflicts checking, calendar and docket control. Ensures completeness and accuracy of these case control tools. Notifies defender organization staff and clients of court dates and other appointments.
4. Assists in preparation and filing of pleadings, motions and briefs, correspondence and memoranda. Verifies citations and Shepardizes pleadings as needed. Assists the attorney at hearings and trials by evaluating testimony, coordinating witnesses and documents. Supervises service of subpoenas and notification of witnesses.
5. Assists in the maintenance of banks of substantive motions, briefs and jury instructions. Maintains subject matter indexes and other reference materials and assists staff members with information retrieval from these sources.
6. Locates and retrieves documents, information and records from the library, courthouse and other sources. Requests medical information as needed. Obtains certified copies of documents when necessary.
7. Provides assistance in the planning and presentation of CJA panel training sessions. Assists in the preparation of written materials for distribution to the CJA panel.
8. Performs all other duties as assigned.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Assistant Paralegal reports to the Chief Paralegal or other supervisor as designated by the Defender.

D. QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for the position of Assistant Paralegal, a person must be a high school graduate or the equivalent and must have the requisite experience outlined in the *Salary and Experience Scale* and *Experience Requirements* sections. The individual must be able to perform each essential job duty satisfactorily. The job requirements are representative of knowledge, skills, and/or abilities necessary to perform the essential functions of the job.

PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP: This position may be considered entry into a specialized career track for recent graduates of a college or technical school of recognized standing. Should the most desirable candidate for this position be a new graduate without the requisite years of general and specialized experience, s/he can be hired into an Internship. Employees hired into an Internship must receive direct supervision from the on-staff specialist in this field of work. An Intern-level employee is hired at one grade level lower than the lowest DOCS Grade Level for this position (as indicated below). Professional Interns may receive a Within Grade Increase when eligible, but do not qualify for promotion into a higher DOCS Grade Level until completion of the requisite number of years of general experience listed in the job description. Upon completion of a full Internship, the employee is qualified for promotion into the lowest grade for the position.

E. SALARY AND EXPERIENCE SCALE

DOCS Grade Level	Years of General Experience	Years of Specialized Experience	Total Years of Experience
INTERNSHIP: 7	0 - 3	0 - 1	0 - 4
8	3	1	4
9	3	2	5
10	3	2	5

Note: One year of the required experience must have been at, or equivalent to, the next lower grade in federal service. Experience that has not provided training or required the application of the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined in the *Primary Job Duties* section above is **not** creditable experience. Specialized experience may always substitute for general experience but general experience may not substitute for specialized experience.

F. EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

General Experience

Experience that provides evidence the individual has:

- a general understanding of the methods and skills required for accomplishing the tasks outlined in the *Primary Job Duties* section above;
- a general understanding of office confidentiality issues, such as attorney/client privilege;
- the ability to read, analyze and interpret common technical journals and legal documents;
- the ability to apply common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written, oral or diagram form;
- the ability to analyze and apply relevant policies and procedures to office operations;
- the ability to exercise good judgment in a mature and diplomatic manner;
- the ability to communicate orally and in writing;
- a general knowledge of office practices and legal processes;
- the ability to recognize and analyze problems and recommend practical solutions;
- the ability to use a personal computer.

Specialized Experience

Progressively responsible paralegal experience in the functional areas described in the *Primary Job Duties* section above. Such experience provides the individual:

- a working knowledge of law office operations, legal practices, methods and techniques;
- an understanding of paralegal and secretarial duties in a legal environment;
- skill and judgment in the analysis of assignments;
- an understanding of criminal law, criminal procedure, and evidence;
- experience as a paralegal performing progressively responsible paralegal duties;
- the skills and ability to execute the duties of the position.

G. EDUCATIONAL SUBSTITUTIONS

Education above the high school level in accredited institutions may be substituted for the general experience on the basis of one academic year (30 semester or 45 quarter hours) equals nine months of experience.

Completion of all the requirements for a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and having met one of the following may be substituted for one year of specialized experience:

1. An overall “B” grade point average equaling 2.9 or better of a possible 4.0.
2. Standing in the upper third of the class.
3. A “B+” (3.5) grade point average or better in major fields of study such as business or public administration, criminal justice, political science, law, management or specialized or significant course work in a field closely related to the subject matter of this position.
4. Election to membership in Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma XI, or one of the National Honor Scholastic Societies meeting the minimum requirements of the Association of College Honor Societies, other than Freshman Honor Societies.

Completion of one academic year (30 semester or 45 quarter hours) of graduate study in an accredited university in such fields as business or public administration, criminal justice, political science, law, management or other field closely related to the subject matter of the position, may be substituted for one year of specialized experience.

Completion of a master’s degree or two years of graduate study (60 semester or 90 quarter hours) in an accredited university in such fields as business or public administration, criminal justice, political science, law, management or other field closely related to the subject matter of the position, or completion of a Juris Doctor (JD), may be substituted for two years of specialized experience.

H. PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

The physical demands described are representative of those required in order for an individual to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the individual is regularly required to sit and talk or hear. The individual frequently is required to use hands to touch, handle, or feel. The individual is frequently required to stand, walk and reach with hands and arms. The individual must occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. Frequent travel to court locations and detention facilities may be required. The individual will spend most of his/her time in an office environment.