

## **Richmond Paralegal Association**

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The Richmond Paralegal Association (RPA) is a non-profit corporation organized in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As an association of paralegals, our primary goals are continuing education and recognition in the legal field. Our membership consists of paralegals, legal professionals and educators from the City of Richmond and the surrounding metropolitan areas.

The Association supports paralegals through continuing education programs, seminars and workshops. We promote the paralegal profession by providing literature and arranging for speakers to address various school groups and career workshops. We work with the local and state bar associations in the adoption of standards for paralegals in this rapidly growing field.

Membership provides an opportunity to exchange and share experiences, opinions and knowledge with other paralegals with a wide variety of experience and training.

As an affiliate of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc., our members are governed by the ABA Standing Committee on Professional Ethics Opinion No. 316 (January 18, 1967), the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and adherence to the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. adopted by the Richmond Association of Legal Assistants.

RPA is also a member of the Virginia Alliance of Paralegal Associations (VAPA), which provides a statewide voice within the legal community.

## **The Paralegal Profession at a Glance**

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Paralegals are a distinguishable group of persons who assist attorneys in the delivery of legal services. Through formal education, training and experience, paralegals have knowledge and expertise regarding the legal system and substantive and procedural law which qualify them to do work of a legal nature under the supervision of an attorney.

Examples of the areas of practice and the types of duties performed by paralegals are as follows:

**Bankruptcy** - gather information, draft documents, assist at meetings and hearings, maintain and update records;

**Corporate** - draft documents for incorporation, corporate mergers and acquisitions, and the forming of limited liability companies and partnerships;

**Employee Benefits** - help establish, maintain and update employee benefits packages for a variety of employers with individual and specific needs;

**Environmental** - fact and site investigations, research laws, assist in facilities permits and compliance problems;

**Government/Lobbying** - monitor progress of proposed legislative bills and track changes to existing laws;

**Litigation** - draft pleadings, conduct investigation, assist in pre-trial preparation, review and summarize documents, perform post-trial work, prepare collection documents, and attend depositions;

**Real Estate** - draft contracts, leases and other documents, review loan documents, perform title work, coordinate and assist at closings;

**Tax** - gather information for and draft many types of returns, and assist in compiling and maintaining documents for audits or disputes; and

**Trusts and Estates** - draft wills and trust documents, maintain financial records, and draft accountings.

## **The National Association of Legal Assistants**

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In response to a need for a strong unified voice to represent paralegals nationwide, the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA), was incorporated in April of 1975 as a non-profit organization. NALA encourages paralegals to commit themselves to the concepts of professional development and continuing education.

In 1976, NALA established the nation's only voluntary certification program for paralegals. The Certified Legal Assistant (CLA™) examination allows paralegals to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise in their career and to show a commitment to professional development.

Each year NALA conducts a variety of national and regional seminars in conjunction with its affiliates. There is also an annual convention held in July of each year attended by paralegals throughout the United States.

## **Association Activities**

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The Association offers the following activities to its membership:

- Semi-monthly dinner meetings (held the fourth Tuesday of the month) with informative speakers covering topics such as professional responsibility, use of computers in litigation, crime prevention, and the lottery;
- Annual seminar with keynote speakers and concurrent sessions on various aspects of the legal field followed by a reception;
- Law Day Luncheon in recognition of Law Week;
- Brown Bag Lunches held semi-monthly at various locations with speakers on topics of special interest to select groups;
- Study groups to prepare for the CLA™ examination;
- Joint seminars with other paralegal organizations from Virginia. These seminars have concurrent sessions with speakers from Richmond as well as the rest of the Commonwealth;
- Three annual Alliance meetings; and
- Reception in celebration of Virginia Paralegals Week.

RPA maintains a Job Bank, which is free to members and area employers. The Association also publishes a quarterly Newsletter containing updates on happenings in the profession, along with notices of meetings and seminars.

**Richmond Paralegal Association**  
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**An Invitation  
to Join**