PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OHIO
P.O. Box 1582
Columbus, OH 43216-1582
www.pacoparalegals.org

What is a paralegal?

A Paralegal is a person, qualified through education, training or work experience to perform substantive legal work that requires knowledge of legal concepts and is customarily, but not exclusively, performed by a lawyer. This person may be retained or employed by a lawyer, law office, governmental agency or other entity or may be authorized by administrative, statutory or court authority to perform this work. Substantive shall mean work requiring recognition, evaluation, organization, analysis, and communication of relevant facts and legal concepts.

Understanding the Nature of Paralegal Training & Work

Paralegals are trained in several ways. Many of the first paralegals received their jobs based on work experience or "on-the-job training." Some community colleges offer associate's degrees in paralegals studies, or undergraduate paralegal certificates. Other colleges offer a bachelor's degree in paralegal studies or post-baccalaureate certificates. Some of these schools have received approval from the American Bar Association (ABA), provided that their curricula and other requirements meet the ABA's standards. A bachelor's degree is a definite asset and formal training is encouraged as the number of applicants for paralegal positions is increasing dramatically.

Paralegal Association of Central Ohio (PACO)

PACO is a professional association of approximately 200 paralegals in the Central Ohio area. The organization strives to:

- promote the interest of paralegals;
- develop more qualified individuals to enter the profession;
- serve as a network for practicing paralegals;
- promote paralegal awareness in the community; and
- serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and discussion of issues facing the profession.

PACO members participate in:

- monthly general membership meetings;
- continuing legal education seminars;
- mentoring program;
- pro bono activities; and
- social and informative events throughout Central Ohio.

Membership Benefits

PACO is always on the lookout for new paralegal members interested in promoting and supporting our chosen profession. One of the ways paralegals can accomplish this is by membership in the only professional association in central Ohio solely devoted to serving the needs and interests of paralegals.

Members of PACO automatically become members of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) and have the *option* to join the Columbus Bar Association (CBA) as an associate member.

Some of the benefits of membership in PACO include:

- Paralegal continuing education seminars;
- Free subscription to the National Paralegal Reporter, a publication of the NFPA.
- Networking opportunities and social events;
- Job placement services;
- Presentations by distinguished speakers on topics of interest to paralegals;
- Public relations outreach activities; and,
- Leadership opportunities to serve as an Executive Board member, Representative or Committee Chair.

Membership Categories

- **Paralegal Membership.** An applicant shall be eligible for admission to Membership as a Paralegal Member if he/she is presently employed in a paralegal or non-traditional paralegal role who is not incarcerated. This is a voting membership.

- **Paralegal Associate Membership.** An applicant shall be eligible for admission to Membership as a Paralegal Associate Member if he/she is presently not employed in a paralegal or non-traditional paralegal role who is not incarcerated. This is a non-voting membership.

- **Paralegal Student Membership**. An applicant shall be eligible for admission to Membership as a Student Member if he/she is presently enrolled in a paralegal course of study that is approved by the American Bar Association ("ABA") or equivalent curriculum, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools ("ACICS") or other institutionally accredited school who is not incarcerated. A Student Member may be sponsored by their school/program administrator, teacher or state licensed attorney. This is a non-voting membership.

- **Paralegal Military-Veteran Membership.** An applicant shall be eligible for admission to Membership as Paralegal Military-Veteran Member if he/she is a paralegal currently serving on Active/In-Active Duty in the armed forces of the United States of America no matter where they are stationed or a paralegal who is a Veteran from the Military and who is not incarcerated. The voting for this membership will be determined by the Board.

- **Paralegal Retiree Membership.** An applicant shall be eligible for admission to Membership as a Retiree Member who is not incarcerated. This is a non-voting membership.

- **Sustaining Membership.** An applicant shall be eligible for admission to membership as a Sustaining Member if such applicant is a person, partnership, organization or other entity interested in supporting the purposes and objectives of PACO and not currently employed in a Paralegal capacity. Sustaining Members in good standing shall be entitled to participate in the affairs of PACO except that they shall not have the right to vote, nor be eligible to hold office.

Columbus Bar Association Associate Membership

All PACO members are extended the opportunity to join the Columbus Bar Association (CBA) as an *Associate Member*. Benefits of the CBA *Associate Membership* include free legal research from Fastcase, discounted CLE's, complimentary membership to over 35 substantive law committees, access to the CBA's new Learning Library, and many local discounts on a variety of services. To learn more about CBA Benefits, click **here**.

For CBA *Associate Membership* information click **here**. If you have any questions about the CBA *Associate Membership*, contact Becky Hartman at 614-378-8491 or email at becky@cbalaw.org.

Contact Information

For additional information, please contact PACO's Vice President and Membership Coordinator at membership@pacoparalegals.org or go to the JOIN PACO tab to become a member!