

Paralegals and Legal Assistants

SOC: 23-2011 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$61,010

Median Salary

376,200

Employment

+0.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Associate's degree

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 28.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

6.7/10 - Good work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	3.4/10	Investigative	8.0/10
Artistic	5.8/10	Social	7.4/10
Enterprising	8.6/10	Conventional	7.2/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Detail oriented, Interpersonal skills, Organizational skills, Research skills

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Paralegals and Legal Assistants are legal support professionals who assist lawyers by performing **research, document preparation, case management, and administrative tasks**. They play a critical role in the legal system by helping attorneys work more efficiently and ensuring cases are organized, accurate, and prepared on time. While paralegals and legal assistants do not provide legal advice or represent clients in court, their work directly supports legal strategy and client service.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy detailed work, legal research, and working behind the scenes in fast-paced, deadline-driven environments.

What Do Paralegals and Legal Assistants Do?

Paralegals and legal assistants support attorneys throughout the lifecycle of a legal matter. Their responsibilities vary by practice area but consistently focus on research, documentation, and coordination.

Common responsibilities include:

- Conducting legal research and summarizing findings
- Drafting legal documents such as pleadings, contracts, and briefs
- Organizing case files and managing evidence
- Preparing attorneys for trials, hearings, and depositions
- Communicating with clients, courts, and opposing counsel
- Tracking deadlines and maintaining calendars
- Reviewing documents for accuracy and compliance

Types of Paralegals and Legal Assistants

Paralegals and legal assistants often specialize by area of law:

- Litigation Paralegals: Support trial preparation and courtroom proceedings.
- Corporate Paralegals: Assist with contracts, compliance, and corporate filings.
- Family Law Paralegals: Work on divorce, custody, and domestic relations cases.
- Real Estate Paralegals: Handle property transactions and title documentation.
- Intellectual Property Paralegals: Support patents, trademarks, and copyrights.
- Government and Public Sector Paralegals: Assist in regulatory or public service legal work.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Paralegals and legal assistants combine legal knowledge with strong organizational skills.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Training Pathway

Entry into this field typically requires postsecondary education and practical training:

- Associate or Bachelor's Degree: Commonly in paralegal studies or legal studies
- Paralegal Certificate Programs: For individuals with degrees in other fields
- On-the-Job Training: Firm- or agency-specific procedures and software
- Professional Certification (optional): Credentials that demonstrate legal competence
- Continuing Education: Ongoing learning to stay current with laws and procedures

Some states regulate the use of the title "paralegal," while others rely on employer standards.

Where Do Paralegals and Legal Assistants Work?

Paralegals and legal assistants are employed across many legal and regulatory settings:

- Law Firms
- Corporate Legal Departments
- Government Agencies and Courts
- Insurance Companies
- Real Estate and Title Companies
- Nonprofit and Advocacy Organizations

Many roles are office-based, with increasing opportunities for hybrid or remote work.

How Much Do Paralegals and Legal Assistants Earn?

Earnings vary based on education, experience, specialization, and employer:

- Entry-Level Paralegals: Typically earn professional hourly or salaried wages
- Experienced or Specialized Paralegals: Often earn higher pay in corporate or complex legal fields
- Senior or Supervisory Roles: May earn more with leadership responsibilities

Compensation can also vary significantly by geographic region and practice area.

Is This Career Difficult?

This career is intellectually demanding and detail-oriented. Paralegals and legal assistants must manage large volumes of information, strict deadlines, and complex procedures. The challenge lies in maintaining accuracy, organization, and confidentiality while supporting multiple cases at once.

Who Should Consider Becoming a Paralegal or Legal Assistant?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy research, writing, and organization
- Are interested in the legal system without becoming a lawyer
- Can work efficiently under deadlines
- Value accuracy and ethical responsibility
- Want a stable legal career with diverse specialization options

How to Prepare Early

- Develop strong reading comprehension and writing skills
- Learn basic research and document organization techniques
- Practice attention to detail and time management
- Explore internships or entry-level legal support roles
- Research paralegal education and certification programs

Paralegals and legal assistants are essential to the legal profession, providing the research, organization, and support that allow attorneys and courts to function effectively.