

2020-2021 Spokane County Bar Association
Paralegal Registration Procedure

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for requesting the enclosed Paralegal registration information from the Spokane County Bar Association's Paralegal Registration Committee ("Committee"). The Committee is responsible for implementing and overseeing this program.

Various terms are used herein to describe candidates eligible for this registration program, such as "Paralegal", "Legal Assistant", and "Contract Paralegal". The Committee uses the term "Paralegal" interchangeably for each of these terms throughout this registration material. If you work as an employee or as an independent contractor for one law firm, governmental agency, corporation or other entity, you are referred to as a "Traditional Paralegal". If you work on any basis other than a Traditional Paralegal, you are referred to as a "Contract Paralegal". The American Bar Association's definition of a "Paralegal" is as follows:

A legal assistant or paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience, who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.

I. CRITERIA

In order to register as a Paralegal authorized to present ex-parte and agreed orders in Superior and District Courts in Spokane County under both LCR 54(f)(3), LCR 79(h)(1) and LARLJ 10, the Applicant must meet the criteria stated under numbers 1, 2 and 3 (a), (b), (c), or (d) below:

1. The Applicant must:
 - a. Have been employed full-time as a Paralegal for at least twelve months in Spokane County for an attorney licensed to practice in the State of Washington; or
 - b. In the case of a Contract Paralegal, have been under contract with or under the direction or supervision of at least one attorney licensed to practice in the State of Washington and practicing in Spokane County for whom the Applicant has performed paralegal work (either under an existing or prior contract) for at least twelve months; or
 - c. Have been employed full-time as a Paralegal for at least six months in Spokane County for an Attorney licensed to practice in the State of Washington and was registered under a local rule with similar criteria in another jurisdiction in Washington State for an Attorney licensed to practice in the State of Washington;
 - d. Have applied in writing for a reduction or waiver of the waiting period, which for good cause, may be reduced or waived by the Committee.
2. Applicant's job description must meet the criteria for working as a Paralegal in accordance with the ABA definition of a Paralegal stated above, i.e., the duties must be substantially comprised of performing substantive legal work which, absent the Paralegal, would be performed by an attorney. The number of hours Applicant devotes to paralegal work (non-clerical work) must total 50% or more of the Applicant's normal working period. A Paralegal who spends less than 50% of his/her time performing paralegal work, but who otherwise may be qualified to participate in this registration program may request a waiver of the 50% test. The SCBA will reject applications that do not include a complete and detailed job description, which provides enough information to evidence that the "paralegal work" requirement has been met. **APPLICANT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE TO DEMONSTRATE HIS/HER COMPLIANCE WITH THE ABOVE CRITERIA.**

3. The Applicant must:

- a. Have an associate's degree in paralegal studies with a minimum of 95 quarter* credit hours, which included a minimum of 29 quarter* credit hours of law-related courses; or
- b. Have an associate's degree in a program law-related other than paralegal studies, including a minimum of 29 quarter* credit hours of law-related courses; or
- c. Have a bachelor's degree in paralegal studies, with a minimum of 95 quarter* credit hours, including a minimum of 29 quarter* credit hours of law-related courses; or
- d. Have a bachelor's degree in a program law-related other than paralegal studies, including a minimum of 29 quarter* credit hours of law-related courses; or
- e. Have a minimum of four years (which may include the one-year initial waiting period set out in 1.a. above) of experience working as a "Paralegal" as that term is defined herein.

*Or equivalent semester hours.

4. After the Applicant has received notification of approval for registration from the Committee, the registered Paralegal review orientation materials through the Spokane County Bar Association prior to exercising the privileges of registration. The orientation is to familiarize and assist the registered Paralegal with court procedures and to provide an introduction to Court personnel and members of the Judiciary. It is the responsible attorney's duty to ensure that the Applicant is familiar with court procedures and is encouraged to attend the orientation session with Applicant.

Students attending law school will not qualify for this program, unless specific written permission is granted by the Dean of the law school, and the student meets all the criteria set out above.

Any person who has had a professional license suspended or revoked may not be eligible for this program. Any person who has had registration under a similar local rule suspended or revoked may not be eligible for this program.

A determination as to eligibility for this registration shall be made based on the explanation attached to the application and any supplemental information Applicant may wish to provide to the Committee.

II. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Traditional Paralegal: The Applicant must submit with his/her initial application, a letter of recommendation from Applicant's responsible attorney, a Declaration of Responsible Attorney, Applicant's Declaration, diploma and unofficial transcripts and a \$57 application fee. This documentation should be submitted to the SCBA Paralegal Registration Committee, 1116 West Broadway Avenue, 4th Floor Annex, Spokane, Washington 99260-0030.

2. Contract Paralegal: The Applicant, in addition to the requirements in II.1 above, must submit a declaration for each law firm (other than the responsible attorney's law firm) under contract with the Applicant, signed by the supervising or managing attorney responsible for the work performed by the Applicant. It will be the duty of each Applicant and/or responsible or supervising attorney, to notify the Committee in writing upon termination of the Applicant's services.

3. Change in Status: If there is a change of responsible attorney, the Applicant must notify the Committee in writing of the change and submit a declaration of Applicant's new responsible attorney, together with a change of information form. No fee shall be charged unless the change occurs simultaneously with the annual renewal procedure, in which case the renewal fee shall be due. If there has been a change in any other information, a Change of Information form shall be completed and submitted to the committee. The Change of Information form can be downloaded from the SCBA website.

4. Renewal: The Applicant shall renew his/her registration annually by completing a Renewal Application and submitting it with a renewal fee of \$57. All changes in status must be disclosed on a Change of Information form and submitted with the completed Renewal Application. The registration year is the fiscal year ending August 31st. All renewal applications must be submitted to the Committee no later than November 10th of each year or be delinquent. Registered Paralegals whose dues have become delinquent will be dropped from the rolls and struck from the SCBA mailing list. If the renewals are not submitted prior to the deadline, a new application must be submitted.

III. SCOPE OF AUTHORIZATION

Upon application approval by the Committee and completion of the orientation session described in (4) above, you will be issued a registration card signed by the Chair of the Committee.

Registration with the Spokane County Bar Association entitles you to the following:

1. Use of the Spokane County Law Library in accordance with its policies and procedures;
2. Presentment of agreed and/or ex-parte orders as authorized under LCR 54(f)(3), LCR 79(h)(1) and LARLJ 10;
3. Subscription to the SCBA electronic newsletter, *Calendar Call*;
4. Attendance to SCBA Events and apply for SCBA Courthouse badge; and
4. Authority to withdraw original court files from the Clerk of Court for use within the Courthouse pursuant to state and local court rules and subject to the Superior and District Court Clerks own rules, policies and procedures.

IMPORTANT: REGISTRATION WITH THE SPOKANE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION ENTITLES YOU ONLY TO THE ABOVE AND SHALL NOT BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT PURPORT TO LICENSE OR CERTIFY YOU IN ANY FASHION AS A PARALEGAL OR ALLOW YOU TO ENGAGE IN THE UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW.

IV. TERMINATION OF REGISTRATION

You and your responsible attorney share responsibility for notifying the Committee if:

1. You cease employment with your present responsible attorney; or
2. In the case of a Contract Paralegal, you discontinue performing services for your responsible attorney (without substituting a new responsible attorney); or
3. A license under which you or your responsible attorney performs legal services is suspended or revoked.
4. Failure to renew before November 10th will result in termination of registration.

Upon the occurrence of any of the above events, you must return your registration card and if you have a courthouse badge to the SCBA office, and all privileges cease until a change of status is processed and approved by the Committee. Upon approval, a new registration card will be issued.

THE REGISTERED PARALEGAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE (RPPC) MAY revoke a registered Paralegal's privileges granted under this program upon a showing of good cause or upon the failure to comply with rules and guidelines promulgated by the RPPC in connection with this registration program.

The enclosed application will be processed and, if approved, you will be contacted by the SCBA Registered Paralegal Program Coordinator to schedule an orientation session. After you have completed the orientation, you will be issued a registration card that identifies you to Court personnel and Judicial Officers as

having privileges under this program. **Always present your registration card when presenting eligible Orders to the Court, and place your signature, together with your assigned bar number, next to that of the attorney for whom you are presenting the Order.** You may not present eligible Orders under this authority until you receive your registration card. Your authority will be in effect for the fiscal year for which your registration card is issued.

Your responsible attorney is strongly encouraged to accompany you to Court until you are familiar and comfortable with the routine of presenting authorized Orders under this authority.

Thank you for your interest in the Paralegal Registration Program. If you or your responsible attorney have any questions, please contact the SCBA Paralegal Registration Coordinator at 509-477-2672 or in person at 1116 West Broadway Avenue, 4th Floor Annex, Spokane, Washington 99260-0030.

Enclosures: 1) Paralegal Registration Program Application
 2) Declaration of Applicant
 3) Declaration of Responsible Attorney

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