



reporter

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LAPA 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS & OFFICERS



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



LAPA 2024

by Jonathan Dang – LAPA President

Welcome to 2024 and it is a great pleasure to serve as the President of the Los Angeles Paralegal Association. In my tenure with the association, this is one of the best boards of directors we have had to date. The board is diverse in its wide range of practice areas from litigation to probate and holds nearly a century of working experience combined. We are excited to bring back numerous programs such as educational conferences, mixers, and mentoring. LAPA has also partnered with many associations in the California region and on more collaborative events this year. LAPA will also expand its national reach by strengthening its relationships with NALA and

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DIRECTORS AT LARGE



Don Adove



Elizabeth Garcia, ACP



Aldo Guzman



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LAPA REPORTER

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THE ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL DEADLINE IS THE 5TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO PUBLICATION.

Articles and news items should be directed to LAPA at editor@lapa.org. Inquiries about making a submission should be directed to LAPA at info@lapa.org.

Inquiries about advertising placement, applications, membership materials and address changes should be directed to LAPA at admin@lapa.org.

Articles will be published as space permits. The Newsletter Committee reserves approval and edit rights on any article submitted.

The Los Angeles Paralegal Association is a non-profit, mutual benefit corporation and is tax exempt within the meaning of section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code. Membership dues and donations to LAPA are not tax deductible as charitable gifts, but may be deductible as related business expenses. LAPA suggests that you consult your tax advisor in this regard.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - cont. from page 1

other paralegal associations in the country. It is also a priority of mine to address diversity and inclusion by celebrating each heritage month and working with all communities.

The board will also address the needs of our student members all the way to our seasoned paralegals; so no one is left behind. We will also periodically provide new updates in certain practice areas to properly prepare working Paralegals at their firms. Off the top of my head, they include artificial intelligence and updates to California's code of civil procedure. LAPA will continue to strive to strengthen and advance the Paralegal Association in Los Angeles. Thank you again and I am thrilled to lead one of the highly-acclaimed Paralegal Associations in the nation.

Jonathan Dang is currently a Paralegal with Freeman Mathis & Gary LLP. In his diverse career, he previously worked for a Fortune 100 insurance company, private law firms, and the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. Jonathan Dang is also currently enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves. Aside from LAPA, he also serves on the board of directors for the University of La Verne's Legal Studies Program and Mt. San Antonio's Paralegal Program.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

- 3- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 10 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 24- **AI Unveiled: Balancing the Benefits and Burdens with Legal Perspectives** – Online via Zoom; 6:00-7:00 PM; Featuring: Morvareed Z. Salehpour Esq.; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-5569009> for more information & to register.

FEBRUARY

- 7- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 14 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 22- **Paralegal Happy Hour Mixer** – Far Bar, 347 1st St., LA, CA 90012; 6:00 PM; Sponsored by: LAPA & First Legal; Go to <https://lapa.org/event-5604018> for more information & to register.
- 27- **Black History Month Panel Discussion** – Online via Zoom; 6:00-7:00 PM; Featuring: Katie Oliver, ACP, Kai Williamson, & Terri Walters, CCP, CP; Go to <https://www.lapa.org> for more information & to register.

MARCH

- 6- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 13 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.

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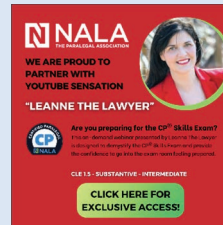
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NALA THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION CERTIFICATION CORNER



YOUR FUTURE AS A CERTIFIED PARALEGAL (CP®) AWAITS!

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into your legal future!

DISCLAIMER: The NALA CP® Exam creators do not develop or deliver any CP® Exam study materials. Producers of study materials do not have access to actual CP® Exam content. Use of any suggested study materials does not guarantee success on the CP® Exam.

PREPARING FOR THE CP® KNOWLEDGE EXAM?

We would love for you to be amongst the first testing group for the updated CP® Exam in January 2024. There will be a new section on the Knowledge Exam: Debtor/Creditor and Bankruptcy. For anyone taking the Knowledge Exam in January, we will refund your testing center fee for that section of the CP® Exam (it must be paid upfront during the application process). You can be a trendsetter and help set the standard by taking the updated Knowledge Exam in January 2024.

CP® PARTNER TESTING IS COMING BACK!

Employers, schools, and military bases, we are bringing back Partner Testing! In 2024, you will be able to administer the CP® Exam at your business, school, or military base for aspiring CPs! For more information, click [here](#) and scroll to the PSI Partner Testing drop-down.

CPS, HERE IS HOW TO ENTER YOUR CLE.

As a Certified Paralegal (CP®), it is imperative that you know how to enter your CLE credits into your NALA account so that you can qualify for recertification. We made a video to serve as a step-by-step guide on entering your CLE credits. In addition to showing you how to add CLE credits to your NALA account, it also explains the three types of CLE: substantive, non-substantive, and legal ethics. To learn more about the different types of CLE and how to enter them into your account, click below to watch the video.

Step-by-Step Guide: How To Enter Your CLE

Melody Drew

www.nala.org

For more information contact:

Michelle Tabb, ACP,

Terry Wright, ACP, LAPA Board Director

Doug Kuhn, CP

LAPA Paralegal Certification Committee Members



Looking Forward Despite COVID-19

by Deena Bowman

Living with the COVID-19 virus has changed our means of enjoying recreational and cultural pursuits. However, good times can still be experienced –albeit in different ways. January is ending, but up next is February – which brings Black History month celebrations, the Chinese New Year and Valentine’s Day.



CHOIRS AT COLBURN CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Adrian Dunn leads the Choirs at Colburn in performing works for voice in celebration of Black History Month. The concert takes place on Saturday, February 17 at 2:00 in Downtown Los Angeles. For more information and to RSVP, go to <https://dola.com/events/2024/2/17/choirs-at-colburn-celebrate-black-history-month-tickets>



CELEBRATE THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON

The Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena rings in the Lunar New Year with a free afternoon of pan-Asian activities. There will be traditional performances in the museum’s courtyard, plus art activities, food trucks and free admission to the galleries. The

festivities start at 11:00 am on Saturday, February 10. For more information, see https://calendar.usc.edu/event/lunar_new_yearpam



DO A VALENTINE’S CUPID RUN AND FIGHT BREAST CANCER

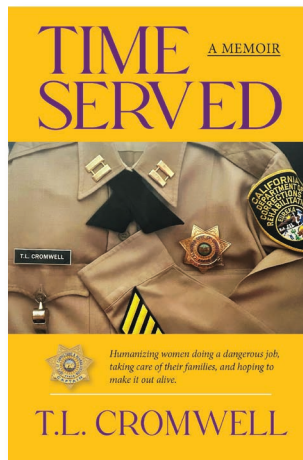
Take part in a 5K, 10K, or 21K Half Marathon that benefits the American Cancer Society. The Run Against Breast Cancer takes place on Saturday morning, February 10, in Santa Monica’s Palisades Park. Participants will receive a Swag Bag and access to a virtual community of runners. For more information and to register, see <https://raceroster.com/events/2024/80602/run-against-breast-cancer-5k10k131-los-angeles>

Deena Bowman is a Senior Legal Analyst at the State Compensation Insurance Fund in Glendale, California. Deena earned her paralegal certificate from the University of West Los Angeles, and she was a former Director at Large with LAPA. [LAPA](#)

LAPA READING CORNER

A recurring column that reviews books focusing on voices and subjects that reflect the diversity of the human experience

by Deena Bowman



Time Served: A Memoir by T.L. Cromwell

T. L. Cromwell, an African American woman, shares her *Time Served* as a correctional officer in some of the toughest prisons in California

from 1994 until her retirement in 2015. Cromwell humorously notes that she never intended to be a correctional officer: “. . . I wanted to be what all kids say they want to be when they grow up: a doctor, a

continued on page 5



New 2024 Developments Impacting Personal Injury and Employment Cases

by Elizabeth Garcia, ACP

The MCLE provided by Consumer Attorneys Association Los Angeles (“CAALA”) on January 25, 2024 presented a comprehensive exploration of the forthcoming legal changes, particularly impacting personal injury cases. Attorneys Alyssa Schbloski, Ben Siminou, and Bob Simon provided an enlightening session on the New 2024 Developments Impacting Personal Injury and Employment Cases. A pivotal focus was on the implications of CCP 2016.090, a significant change in the Civil Discovery Act introduced by Governor Newsom through Senate Bill 235. This transformative legislation mandates initial disclosures upon any party’s demand, with amendments targeting CA Civil Code Section 2016.090 and 2023.050. Applicable to cases filed post-January 1, 2024 until 2027, the demand initiates a 60-day window for the production. The comprehensive list of disclosures range anywhere from medical records to contracts relating to liability and the names of relevant individuals, with the exception of future experts, and information that could solely be used for impeachment purposes.


The process requires a declaration by the party, representative, or counsel, and supplemental disclosures may be propounded before and after the trial date, subject to certain conditions. Withholding initial disclosures on various grounds is discouraged, as parties may move to compel disclosure if inadequate. The primary objective of these mandatory disclosures is to reduce delays, streamline litigation, and facilitate early resolution. Sanctions for non-compliance have been elevated to \$1000, at the Court’s discretion, with the possibility of attorneys reporting sanctions to the state bar.

Failure to make initial disclosures may jeopardize the admissibility of documents at trial. The speakers emphasized the need for thorough preparation, early client communication, and consideration of initial disclosures in the discovery stage of a lawsuit.


The presentation concluded with a reminder that California will implement mandatory initial disclosures beginning January 1, 2024. However, exemptions apply to small claims, family law, probate, Section 36 preference cases, and self-represented parties under CCP § 2016.090.”

Elizabeth Garcia, an Advanced Certified Paralegal (ACP) accredited through NALA, began her legal career in 2010 as a legal assistant in Miami, Florida. Early on, she discovered her passion for personal injury law, ultimately specializing in Personal Injury and Litigation when given the opportunity to work for The Liddy Law Firm. As an integral part of the litigation department, she is dedicated to upholding ethical standards while providing exceptional assistance to attorneys and lawyers. Thriving in team-oriented environments, Elizabeth excels in communication with legal department members, clients, and courtroom personnel, continually seeking improvement in her knowledge, skills, and abilities to excel in the paralegal and legal fields.

As a Board of Directors member for LAPA, Elizabeth serves as the Committee Chair for Compliance/MCLE, overseeing legal compliance standards. Additionally, she holds the position of Litigation Chair, actively contributing to the strategic direction and execution of litigation-related initiatives as the Litigation Director at LAPA.

Since August 2020, Elizabeth has been the Litigation Paralegal Manager at The Law Offices of Edward Shkolnikov, EFS Law Center in Burbank, CA, bringing extensive experience in Plaintiff’s Personal Injury cases. Alongside her professional pursuits, Elizabeth enjoys reading, taking walks, and window shopping, with hobbies that include learning fun facts on all things chemistry, biology, and genetics. 

LAPA READING CORNER - cont. from page 4

lawyer, a social worker, or maybe even a teacher.” However, Cromwell found herself divorced and raising her daughter alone and was determined to find a stable career that paid well and kept them out of poverty. Upon the advice and encouragement of male family members who were correctional officers, Cromwell after completing her training, found herself in uniform. *Time Served* dovetails the routines and requirements of the prison system with insights on inmate/correctional officer relationships and the dangerous psychological undercurrents that often affect and direct them. 

2023, 232 Pages, KP Publishing Company, \$19.95 paperback.



Personal Branding: New Year, New You?

by Kristine Custodio Suero, ACP & Kelli Radnothy

“Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.”

– JUDY GARLAND

As we usher in the new year, it’s a common tradition or practice to set resolutions. However, according to an Inc.com article titled “Most People Fail to Achieve Their New Year’s Resolution. For Success, Choose a Word of the Year Instead,” about 80 percent of New Year’s resolutions fail. The author encourages readers to, instead, adopt an anchor word to focus on throughout the year, acting as a mantra of sorts.

You may be wondering, is personal branding really necessary? In this digitally driven world we inhabit, the short answer is YES! Your online presence is not just a representation; it’s an opportunity to create more opportunities. The essence of personal branding aligns with a fundamental business development principle: Know. Like. Trust. Clients prefer doing business with individuals and companies they know, like, and trust.

“Personal branding is the art of becoming knowable, likable, and trustable.”

– JOHN JANTSCH

When delving into the development of your personal brand, several key considerations can pave the way for a successful journey:

DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE: How do you want to resonate with your consumers, whether they are followers, connections, potential collaborators, or employers?

CRAFTING EXPERTISE: Identify the subject matter expertise you want to develop based on your existing knowledge, skills, and abilities.

LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS: Are there seasoned professionals you admire? Analyze what they excel at. If there’s a gap in your skills or experience, outline steps to acquire the necessary proficiency.

FUTURE VISION: Envision where you see yourself in 1 year, 5 years, and 10 years. This long-term perspective can guide your brand development.

SMART GOALS: Set Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound goals. These goals act as milestones on your journey to building a compelling personal brand.

A practical approach involves documenting these considerations in a comprehensive career development plan. To enhance your strategy, consider engaging with an accountability partner or mentor who can provide guidance and support. The influence of a robust support network should not be underestimated. Joining professional associations and actively participating in communities can yield significant dividends in terms of career advancement, opportunities, and personal development.

In this new year, make a deliberate investment in yourself. Elevate your personal brand, understanding that it is an ongoing and dynamic process. As you embark on this journey of self-discovery and brand development, we’d like to explore two valuable resources that shed light on the importance and intricacies of personal branding.

The first resource is an Entrepreneur.com recent article, “[Why Personal Branding Is Important for Every Working Adult](#)” that states,

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“Google yourself. No, really. Go on, do it. Chances are, someone will Google you in your life — whether it be a potential date, friend, customer, or employer. What information is available about you online? This can help you identify any inaccuracies or outdated information that may be giving off a negative or unrepresentative first impression.”

— KELLY FLETCHER

A personal brand is the combination of your unique skills, experiences, and character traits. It serves as a powerful tool to differentiate yourself in a competitive job market or industry. Building and managing a personal brand is not just about personal promotion; it’s a strategic move to advance your career and achieve professional goals.

Key components of effective personal branding include:

- Setting yourself apart from the competition.
- Building a connection with your audience.
- Showcasing achievements and contributions for credibility.
- Positioning yourself as an expert in your field or industry.

To achieve these, ensure your personal brand is relevant, authentic, value-driven, credibility-building, visible, unique, and consistent across platforms.

DEFINING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND: Ask fundamental questions about your upbringing, passions, values, and unique qualities. By answering these questions, you’ll define your personal brand and communicate your strengths and values effectively.

AUDIENCE DEFINITION: Identify your target audience based on age range, geographic location, gender specificity, job title, or industry. Tailor your personal brand to resonate with their needs and interests.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: The significance of social media cannot be overstated. Statistics show that 92% of employers use social media to find talent, and up to 70% use it to screen potential hires. Consistency across platforms is crucial, ensuring that your professional image aligns with your personal brand.

PERSONAL WEBSITE: Consider creating a personal website as a central hub for your online presence. This allows you to control the information available about you, showcasing your skills, experiences, and achievements in a professional manner.

ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT: Be cautious about what you post online, as it can have long-lasting consequences. Regularly monitor your online presence, delete outdated posts, and ensure your information aligns with the personal brand you want to present.

The second resource we’re referencing is a Forbes.com article entitled, *“The Importance Of Curating An Authentic Personal Brand In 2024.”* According to the author,

“Authenticity has become a rare and valuable commodity in an age where personal images are carefully curated and identities crafted for likes and follows.”

— KARA DENNISON

In the quest for career opportunities, there is a temptation to present an idealized version of ourselves on resumes, LinkedIn, and other social media platforms to increase our chances of success. The allure of showcasing only the best parts, the happiest moments, and the greatest successes often overshadows the authenticity that makes each individual special.

The journey toward authenticity can be hindered by past experiences—trying to meet the expectations of parents and mentors, lack of transparency in company policies, the prevalence of ghost job

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postings, and societal pressures. While these reasons may justify the tendency to adopt alter egos, the reality can be frustrating, leaving individuals lonelier while attempting to fit in.

Personal branding is crucial in a world where online presence and personal connections play vital roles. Your personal brand is a composite of strengths, core values, skills, experiences, emotional intelligence, and even weaknesses that define who you are. Establishing an authentic personal brand involves presenting a unique and consistent image of oneself, especially in the job market.

AUTHENTICITY AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

Authenticity and professional growth go hand in hand. Finding opportunities aligned with your values and goals is the starting point. When reaching out to a company, ensure its work culture and values align with your authentic self, creating a supportive environment that allows you to be genuinely interested and fulfilled in your work.

DIFFERENTIATION AND CREDIBILITY: An authentic personal brand sets you apart in a crowded marketplace. While qualifications are important, research indicates that 66% of employers heavily rely on insights from your online presence for hiring decisions. Crafting a well-defined personal brand that aligns with your in-person identity creates trust and a memorable experience, enhancing your qualifications.



“The time is always right to do what is right.”

Martin Luther King Jr.



OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH AUTHENTIC PERSONAL BRANDING: Authentic personal branding fosters relationships, drawing people naturally to those they perceive as genuine and relatable. Building a strong network through authenticity leads to valuable collaborations, partnerships, and opportunities.

Take time for self-reflection to discover your expertise, skills, values, and unique qualities. Analyze past accomplishments to identify strengths and weaknesses. This self-analysis forms the foundation for building a personal brand that authentically communicates who you are.

DEFINE YOUR VALUES AND GOALS: Identify guiding principles and critical experiences that shape your career path. This self-analysis helps define your personal brand and allows effective communication with the world online and in personal interactions.

IDENTIFY TARGET AUDIENCES: Gain clarity on those who would benefit from working with you—employers, potential partners, teammates, and industry influencers. Tailor your brand messaging to resonate with their needs and interests.

EMBRACE ORIGINALITY: In creating an authentic personal brand, originality is key. Reflect on career-defining moments that shaped your decisions, experiences, and aspirations. Your unique perspective, showcased through thought leadership, online content, and interactions, allows you to stand out and be memorable to potential employers and clients.

NETWORK FOR OPPORTUNITIES: Networking, both online and offline, is pivotal for establishing a strong personal brand. Engage with people in companies that align with your ideals, offering insights into their organizational culture and authenticity.

Crafting an authentic personal brand doesn't require perfection. Authenticity thrives on self-awareness, understanding your weaknesses, strengths, motivations, priorities, and values. Consistently communicate these elements through your online presence, interactions, and career choices. Staying

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Navigating the Path To Professional Growth: My Journey With LAPA

by Angelina Shiraishi – LAPA Student Member

As I transition from paralegal student to a professional in the legal field, my journey has been significantly shaped and enriched by the Los Angeles Paralegal Association (LAPA). Founded in 1972, LAPA has played a crucial role in not only developing and strengthening the paralegal profession but also in providing invaluable opportunities for individuals like myself, who started with a budding interest and limited experience in the legal realm. In this article, I'll share my personal perspective on how LAPA has been instrumental in my growth and in securing my first job in the legal field.

Networking Opportunities: Building Connections in the Legal Community

My introduction to LAPA came during my early paralegal studies at UCLA Extension, where I had the pleasure

of meeting Jonathan Dang, the current president of LAPA. This initial encounter marked the beginning of my connection with LAPA, an organization that has proven instrumental in expanding my professional network. LAPA's events, including mentoring panels in neighboring cities like San Diego, and the Annual October Conference, provided unparalleled opportunities to connect with legal professionals, attorneys, and fellow paralegal students.

One standout event for me was the National Paralegal Day Celebration. Despite being on the cusp of my paralegal journey, I felt welcomed with open arms. This celebration served as a gateway to the legal community, allowing me to meet individuals from various legal services, from seasoned professionals to those navigating the legal landscape, much like myself. The interconnectedness of the legal professionals within LAPA became evident, creating a unique and supportive environment that transcends traditional networking.

Professional Development: Broadening Horizons through LAPA's Events

Attending LAPA events, especially the Annual October Conference, has been a cornerstone of my professional development. The conference

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HELPFUL HINTS I - cont. from page 8

true to yourself not only helps you stand out but also opens doors to credibility and career advancement, leading to a fulfilling career aligned with your true self. As we embark on this new year, let it be a journey of self-discovery, growth, and the intentional crafting of an authentic personal brand.

RESOURCES:

<https://www.inc.com/marla-tabaka/why-set-yourself-up-for-failure-ditch-new-years-resolution-do-this-instead.html>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/karadennison/2023/12/18/the-importance-of-curating-an-authentic-personal-brand-in-2024/?sh=61935e454e43>

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/starting-a-business/why-personal-branding-is-important-for-every-working-adult/442903>

Kristine Custodio Suero, ACP is an award-winning legal professional, a published author and a highly sought after speaker. A true servant leader, she has led the San Diego Paralegal Association and California Alliance of Paralegal Associations as President. Kristine teaches legal courses for a local San Diego paralegal program and lends her time to the program's advisory board. Kristine serves on the NALA Board of Directors as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Chair and is a past member of the NALA Professional Development Committee and Continuing Education Council as well as past Ethics Chair. Kristine is a Senior Paralegal/Business Development Director for Butterfield Schechter LLP. Kristine may be reached at kristine.custodio@gmail.com.

Kelli Radnothy is a litigation paralegal with over 20 years of experience in the legal industry. She runs her own legal professional solutions company, contracting with law firms and non-profit organizations to enhance the delivery of legal services. Kelli works as a Legal Researcher for the Nevada Attorney General's Office and as a course developer and instructor for the University of Washington Paralegal Program. Kelli serves as Treasurer for the Paralegal Division of the Nevada State Bar and as Second VP of Sierra Nevada Paralegal Association. Her passion focuses on advancing the paralegal profession and empowering others to make an impact in their community. Kelli holds a B.S. in Criminal Justice, a paralegal certificate from an ABA-approved program, and an E-discovery & Litigation Technology Certificate. Kelli may be reached at kelli@klrparalegal.com. 



Martin Luther King Jr.: A Beacon of Justice and Equality

by Tony Sipp – LAPA V.P. Membership & Policy

Martin Luther King Jr., born on January 15, 1929, was a towering figure in the American civil rights movement. We honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day for his unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and nonviolent activism. King left an indelible mark on the pursuit of civil rights and social justice.

King's early life laid the foundation for his future advocacy. Raised in Atlanta, Georgia, he grew up witnessing racial segregation and discrimination, experiences that fueled his determination to bring about change. King's commitment to civil rights became evident during his leadership in the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, a pivotal event triggered by Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white man. This boycott marked the beginning of King's emergence as a charismatic and influential leader.

King co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an organization dedicated to advancing civil rights through nonviolent protests. His leadership in the SCLC played a crucial role in organizing events like the Birmingham Campaign and the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963, where he delivered his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech. This powerful address emphasized the dream of a nation, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." King's tireless efforts led to significant legislative victories, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which aimed to dismantle institutionalized racism. His dedication to justice extended beyond racial equality, advocating for economic justice and opposing the Vietnam War.

Tragically, King's life was cut short when he was assassinated on April 4, 1968. He would have been 95 this year. However, his legacy endures, inspiring generations to strive for a more just and equitable society. King's impact on the legal landscape is immeasurable, influencing key legal developments in civil rights and shaping the discourse around social justice.

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STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE - cont. from page 9

not only facilitated interactions with seasoned legal professionals but also provided access to legal seminars, service providers, and engaging discussions. The breakout sessions and general sessions allowed me to interact with experts from diverse legal fields, broadening my understanding of the legal landscape and offering insights into potential career paths.

Student Member Scholarship: A Testament to LAPA's Commitment

LAPA's commitment to fostering the next generation of legal professionals is evident through initiatives like the Student Member Scholarship. As a fortunate recipient of this scholarship, LAPA not only alleviated some of the financial burdens of educational expenses but also underscored its dedication to supporting emerging talents. This support came at a crucial time for me, while working at the United States District Court, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world legal scenarios.

Community Engagement and Leadership Opportunities: Shaping a Socially Conscious Paralegal

LAPA's emphasis on community service and leadership aligns seamlessly with its mission to develop well-rounded and socially conscious paralegals. Beyond academic performance, LAPA considers community service and leadership activities in its Student Member Scholarship criteria. Volunteering with LAPA has allowed me to apply legal knowledge in practical settings, contributing to the community and instilling a sense of purpose in my legal journey.

Guidance in Pursuing a Paralegal Career

LAPA's commitment to advancing the paralegal profession extends to providing guidance for students transitioning into the workforce. The organization offers resources, such as the career center, which updates on positions right for you. Plus when going to these events, you never know who may be hiring. And the people at LAPA become great resources for

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Media Relations
publicinfo@lacourt.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 31, 2024

NEW ELECTRONIC FILING PROCEDURE FOR PROPOSED ORDERS IN CIVIL DIVISION CASES EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 5

Beginning February 5, in accordance with [California Rule of Court 3.1312 \(c\)](#), all parties electronically filing (efiling) proposed orders for Civil Division cases, except for small claims cases, must submit the proposed order as both a Portable Document File (PDF) and as a separate editable word-processing file, such as a Microsoft Word document.

Specifically, parties submitting proposed orders in applicable cases must efile the following documents at the same time:

- The *Proposed Order Cover Sheet* ([Form EFS-020](#)) and the proposed order, combined into a single PDF document;
- An editable version of the proposed order.

Editable versions of the proposed order are not required for proposed orders located on either Judicial Council of California or Los Angeles Superior Court approved forms.

The above procedure will be included in future proposed changes to Los Angeles Superior Court Local Court Rule 3.4 (a), regarding Mandatory Electronic Filing.

STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE - cont. from page 10

when you hit those job interviews (virtual ones too!). The people there want you to succeed just as much as you do it feels.

In conclusion, LAPA has been an integral part of my academic and professional journey as a paralegal student. The organization's commitment to education, networking, community engagement, and professional development has not only helped me grow academically but has also played a crucial role in securing my first job in the legal field. I've made great connections, friends and mentors through LAPA which I only see increasing as I continue my path in my legal career. LAPA is not just an association; it's a supportive community that fosters the growth of aspiring legal professionals.

Too bad my student membership is ending soon!

Angelina (Nina) Shiraishi is currently a practice assistant at Mungers, Tollett & Olson LLP. She was previously a judicial extern with the honorable Mame Ewusi-Mensah Frimpong and a recent graduate of the UCLA Extension Paralegal Program. Nina was also awarded as the LAPA scholarship recipient in 2023. She obtained her undergraduate degree from Pitzer College majoring in Economics and a minor in Spanish.

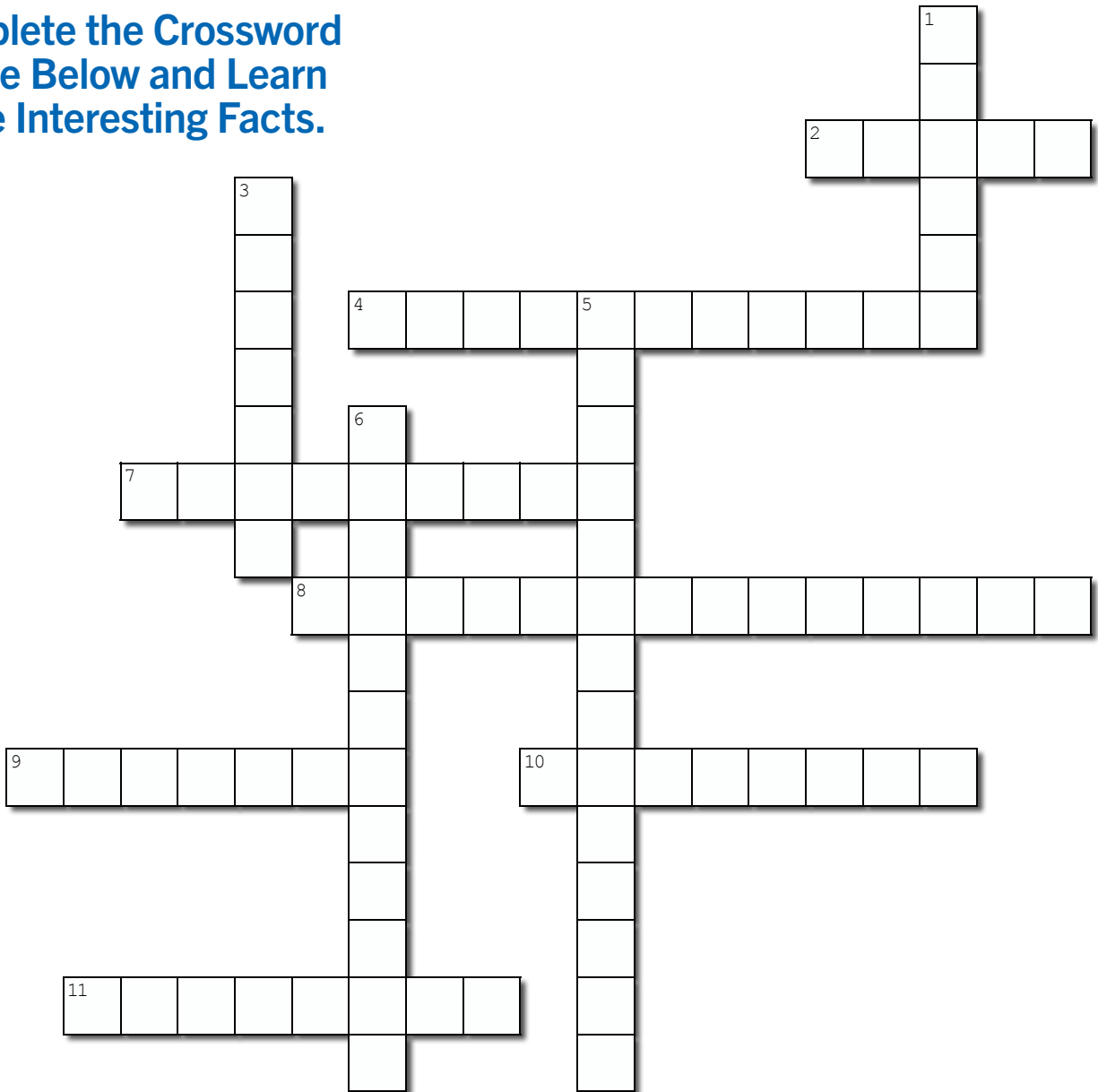
INSPIRATIONAL LEADERS - cont. from page 10

As paralegals, it is crucial to recognize the profound influence of Marian Luther King Jr. in shaping the legal landscape and promoting the principles of justice and equality. His legacy serves as a guiding light for those committed to upholding the values of fairness and equity within the legal profession and beyond. As he stated on X: As he stated in his letter from Birmingham City Jail in 1963, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Tony is the Paralegal Manager at MIK where he manages paralegals at all 7 offices nationwide. He is the former President for Los Angeles Paralegal Association, having led them through the challenges of 2020. He is also a former Council Member for the Greater Valley Glen Neighborhood Council where he Chaired the Government Relations committee. Tony was appointed to the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Diversity in the Profession Committee in 2020. He's been a guest speaker on several professional legal panels as well as podcasts and now he's the co-host of The Paralegal Voice on The Legal Talk Network. He has been published in multiple legal articles and was the recipient of 2020 NALA's Affiliate Award. In his spare time, Tony enjoys spending time with his lovely wife, Krista, and his Chocolate Labrador, Mookie. His hobbies include cycling, capoeira, traveling and reading. He's a bit of a nerd.

January | February Crossword Puzzle

Complete the Crossword Puzzle Below and Learn Some Interesting Facts.



ACROSS:

2. February has been Black History Month for over ____ years.
4. At age eight, she became one of the youngest people to ever enroll in Julliard.
7. The ____ is the birth flower of people born in January.
8. He became the first Black American fighter pilot by fighting for the French during World War I.
9. The month is frequently referred to as “divorce month” by legal practitioners.
10. January is the coldest month of the year in the ____ hemisphere.
11. This word is one of the most misspelled words in the English language.

DOWN:

1. The January birthstone is ____, which symbolizes love, faithfulness, and constancy.
3. Michelle Obama and Mohammed Ali were born in this month.
5. He was a Black NASA scientist who invented the Super Soaker by accident.
6. The term “____” is used to describe the brief period of warm weather that sometimes occurs in January.

ANSWER KEY FOUND ON PAGE 18



A monthly column where sponsors and/or vendors share helpful hints

Connecting Top Talent Paralegals with Thriving Legal Teams in Southern California

by Quidana Dove – Robert Half

In my ten years as a legal recruiter, I am buzzing with excitement! The reason? I have been working with many of the paralegal within the Los Angeles Paralegal Association and placing them in top firms in Los Angeles. This dynamic collaboration promises to revolutionize the legal landscape for both paralegals and law firms in the region. LAPA members offer a pool of the best talent out there.

“This partnership is a game-changer,” enthuses Quidana. “It allows Robert Half to tap into the rich pool of talent represented by LAPA, while providing paralegals with access to a wider range of top-tier legal opportunities—many of which are exclusively looking through Robert Half.”

A MATCH MADE IN LEGAL HEAVEN

The synergy between Robert Half and LAPA is undeniable. Robert Half, a global leader in specialized staffing, boasts an extensive network of law firms across Southern California, all eager to attract and retain top paralegal talent. LAPA, on the other hand, represents a vibrant community of over 2,500 paralegals, each with a unique set of skills and experience.

“This partnership is truly a win-win,” says LAPA President Jonathan Dang. “Our members will gain access to exclusive career resources and job opportunities, while Robert Half will benefit from a direct pipeline to highly qualified legal professionals.”

BEYOND JOB PLACEMENT: BUILDING A THRIVING LEGAL ECOSYSTEM

The partnership goes far beyond simply connecting paralegals with jobs. Robert Half and LAPA are committed to fostering a thriving legal ecosystem within Southern California. They plan to collaborate on a range of initiatives, including:

- Educational workshops and seminars: Providing paralegals with valuable insights on industry trends, career development strategies, and essential legal skills.
- Networking events: Creating opportunities for paralegals to connect with potential employers and build meaningful professional relationships.
- Mentorship programs: Pairing experienced legal professionals with aspiring paralegals to offer guidance and support.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA’S LEGAL COMMUNITY

Quidana Dove is confident that the Robert Half-LAPA partnership will have a significant impact on the legal community within Southern California. “This collaboration will raise the bar for paralegal talent in the region,” she predicts. “It will also empower law firms to build stronger, more efficient teams, ultimately benefiting everyone involved.”

So, what does the future hold for this dynamic partnership? The sky’s the limit. With Quidana Dove’s infectious enthusiasm and the combined expertise of Robert Half and LAPA, the legal landscape in Southern California is poised for an exciting transformation.

Quidana Dove is a highly respected legal recruiter at Robert Half, with a proven track record of success in permanent placement within the Southern California legal market. She is passionate about connecting top paralegal talent with thriving legal teams, and her dedication to her clients is unwavering. Quidana and her team placed hundreds of local, legal professionals in permanent roles just in 2023. 🏢

HAPPY HOUR MIXER

February 22nd at 6 PM PT
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 \$20 for non-members

FL

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A monthly column where sponsors and/or vendors share helpful hints

From Struggle to Six Figures: The Paralegal Entrepreneurship Journey

by Jaclyn Foster – Del.Trust - Law Firm Staffing Solutions

Picture this: A paralegal living in a small, rural town making \$15 per hour, a baby on the way, and realizing that having a job would cost us money after factoring in travel and daycare. The overwhelming reality of feeling stuck debilitates your belief systems, you're barely surviving off one income, and receiving mortgage delinquency notices from the bank.

This was me in late 2019. A jack of all trades (master of none) paralegal that didn't believe in her own abilities, starting to accept the concept that "struggle" was going to be her forever journey. Having a negative account during Christmas while my brand-new baby was having his first certainly didn't help the confidence.

Now fast forward one year to Christmas of 2020. Little did I know I was about to head into a year of becoming a six-figure paralegal. Do you think I could have imagined that by the end of 2022, less than three years later, I would have generated a total of \$775,000 in revenue, net myself \$315,000, and built the home of our dreams?

What moved me from my earning potential of \$15 per hour to becoming a six-figure paralegal was the amazing gift that is paralegal entrepreneurship, and now I get to spend my days inspiring, guiding, and empowering paralegals to do the same.

As a paralegal, you possess valuable skills and expertise for law firms that can be harnessed for entrepreneurial success. By embarking on the path of entrepreneurship, you can break free from the limitations of a traditional job and tap into your full potential.

Becoming a freelance paralegal is a bold step that will absolutely lead you to success you never thought possible, and there's a step-by-step approach that


will guarantee your newfound reality of financial freedom and personal balance (living the soft life, as I like to call it).

Through freelancing or starting a service-based business, you can leverage your legal expertise to create a lucrative career on your terms. Though the path to success may not be linear, with determination, consistency, and passion, you can break from free all preconceived ideas of limitations.

To establish a freelance paralegal business, start by defining your business model – decide whether to operate solo, build a team, or transform into an agency, ensuring scalability in your structure. Identify your "North Star Client" by understanding their demographics, characteristics, and pain points on both personal and professional levels. Based on your chosen business model and target client, determine the services that align best with your goals and the capacity in which you'll deliver them. Set pricing that considers market ranges, aligns with profit margins and client affordability, and meets your personal needs and business goals.

Next, build a strong brand, establish your online presence, create an infrastructure for collaboration with clients, considering scalability and the nature of your services. Implement a consistent marketing schedule focused on your "North Star Client" and brand, while balancing original posts, promotions, and visual content. Prioritize delivering exceptional service to encourage referrals, emphasizing effective communication, and gathering testimonials for showcasing positive reviews on your website and social media.

Head over to paralegalmasterylounge.com for more resources to guide you to your six-figure paralegal reality! From our website, follow me on YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram, and join our private Facebook Community: Paralegal Mastery Lounge.

Jaclyn Foster is a seasoned paralegal entrepreneur and a two-time business founder. With a professional background in paralegal work, Jaclyn embarked on her entrepreneurial journey by establishing Del.Trust - Law Firm Staffing Solutions in March 2020. Del.Trust specializes in offering paralegal contract services, comprehensive legal recruiting, and consultancy to law firms nationwide. Whether through her proven business development track record or her direct industry knowledge, Jaclyn Foster is committed to shaping the future of paralegal careers by sharing insights, strategies, and support for building scalable freelance businesses in the legal realm. 



Show Me The Money!

by Justin D. Bernardino

Compensation is a topic of discussion that even by today's standards is a bit of a faux pas.

Having said that there is no shortage of unsolicited advice on every social media platform including but not limited to TikTok, Instagram, and Reddit, where everyone alleges to be an expert in the field of finding a job, work-life, metrics, compensation, and so on, so much so that they have taken the liberty to “spill the beans” to the world. How much of this is accurate and how much of a crossover is there in between fields such as medicine or law? The answer is this: it is all relevant and applicable because at the end of the day, WE ARE ALL BUSINESSES.

Law is a service industry like any other, and while yes, having fancy diplomas, honors, certifications, American Law and/or Vault 100 alumni status, experience with SCOTUS briefs and/or Anti-SLAPP motions is great, at the end of the day what does that mean for your compensation? With respect to languages, in 2021 it was recorded that on average bilingual employees earned anywhere between 5¢ to 20¢ more per hour than monolinguals¹. But how does or should a company compensate for that? Should you be compensated more per hour per language you speak for those of you who are trilingual or polyglots? Or should we just lump that all as an added skill? Should we compensate you only if you are licensed with those languages? How does this impact your other skills? How should you be compensated for those?

Paralegals are employees that could best be described as those stuck in limbo. Often, one could be tasked with legal work, especially those of us with law school backgrounds who chose not to become full lawyers and/or practicing Attorneys but be classified as non-legal billing staff. Range of responsibilities could be a hybrid between those that were originally meant for Attorneys but couldn't be bothered to handle it themselves – or they're just busy and need help – and those responsibilities more often associated with

Legal Secretaries. At the end of the day, what is a Paralegal, really? Or to be apropos, how should we be classified to reflect our compensation?

Does loyalty really buy you anything anymore? The answer to that question is no, it doesn't, but has it ever? In a recent Forbes Article written by Sho Dewan, he argued that in today's technologically advancing society opportunities to make connections worldwide, making jobs more readily available than they were years ago, has greatly improved opportunities for potential employees², therefore raising the stakes in negotiations for compensation. While there was a lack of opportunities back in the day making loyalty sensible, such logic no longer applies. You lose your job today, move onto the next – just go to LinkedIn, Glassdoor, etc. In another Forbes article written by Cameron Keng in 2014 employees would see less than 1% as opposed to “[t]he average raise an employee receives for leaving is between a 10% and 20% increase in salary. . . there are extreme cases where people receive upwards of 50%³.” In today's society this is all too relevant, especially for Paralegals.

The last question is how much can a Paralegal make, really? The answer to that is all relative. The real question is how are YOU selling yourself in comparison to your cohorts? Paralegals on average start anywhere between low \$35,000 to \$40,000 and can earn as much as much as their Associate counterparts in the six-figure range – even before bonuses and other miscellaneous compensations have been applied. Varying factors go into your compensation such as your experience, where you've worked, your education, and more. And while some big law firms are stuck in the past by evaluating your college GPA from 15+ years ago (despite you having been working as a Paralegal in those same 15 years) at the end of the day it's how tough you are willing to negotiate. You can make an argument that you've had x-number of years of experience at the same firm, but in today's market a person with let's say over 10 years in one place is considered a dinosaur. While yes, you can pull up a mast in the storm, you've only been sailing in the same seas; it will cost us more to have to train you in other methods including but not limited to our own.


continued on page 17

Paralegals have a lot of potential in the market, but to truly make the compensation we feel we are owed we must canvas the market. Apply for a job here and there, jump through the hoops and see what you are offered. Don't jump immediately, do some shopping and make your comparisons. Then once you've taken everything into consideration, move.

1 *Bilingual employees can earn more money per hour than those who speak one language*, Financial Post, August 8, 2023, <https://financialpost.com/personal-finance/business-essentials/bilingual-employees-can-earn-more-money-per-hour-than-those-who-speak-one-language>

2 *Why Not Job Hopping is Hurting Your Career*, Dewan, Sho, Forbes, October 17, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shodewan/2023/10/17/why-not-job-hopping-is-hurting-your-career/?sh=1dfd89474c43>

3 *Employees Who Stay in Companies Longer Than Two Years Get Paid 50% Less*, Keng, Cameron, Forbes, June 22, 2014, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cameronkeng/2014/06/22/employees-that-stay-in-companies-longer-than-2-years-get-paid-50-less/?sh=6f1307c0e07f>

Justin D. Bernardino is an experienced Paralegal specializing in a broad spectrum of coverage in Litigation/Trial Law within the Entertainment Sector and is currently working at Mitchell, Silberberg & Knupp, L.L.P. He is an alumnus of the American Law/Vault 100 and 200 having the likes of Boies, Schiller & Flexner, L.L.P., and Wilson, Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman & Dicker, L.L.P. on his resume. He is fluent in five languages, has experience with behavioral analysis and experimentation, finance, and holds dual degrees in Psychology, and Linguistics, from California State University, Northridge, attended Thomas Jefferson School of Law, and has an American Bar Association Approved Certificate in Paralegal Studies by way of the Extension for University of California, Los Angeles School of Law. 



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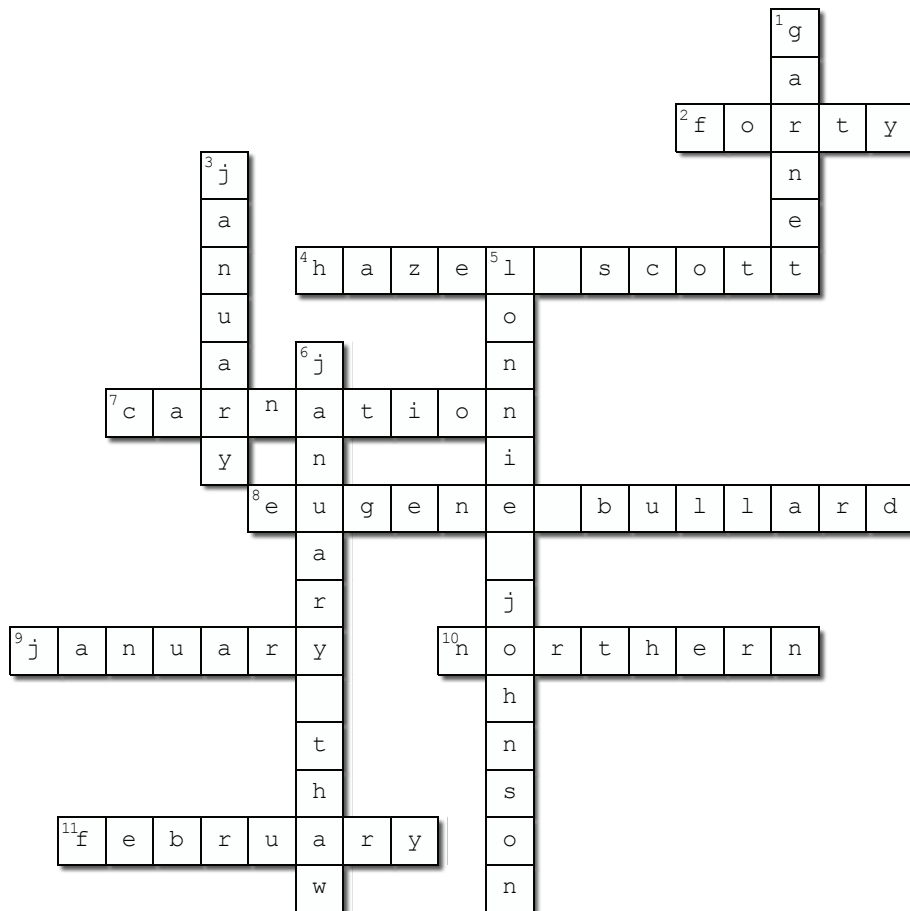


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LAPA'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE - cont. from page 12



**ANSWER
KEY**

ACROSS

- 2. Forty
- 4. Hazel Scott
- 7. Carnation
- 8. Eugene Bullard
- 9. January
- 10. Northern
- 11. February

DOWN

- 1. Garnet
- 3. January
- 5. Lonnie Johnson
- 6. January Thaw

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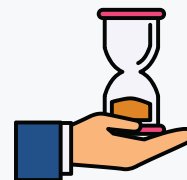
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Child Welfare in Los Angeles County



As of January 2021, there are 38,243 children/youth in the Los Angeles Child Welfare System.



Most children are in the child welfare system for about 2+ years.

Black & Hispanic children encompass

81.5%

of children/youth in care.

High turnover rates in child welfare professions create gaps in knowledge and care, and limit youths' access to consistent and appropriate supports.



In an overwhelmed system, L.A. County professionals face the daunting task of making complex, life-changing decisions about a child/youth's overall well-being.

The Solution? The Essential History Program!

The Essential History Program aims to help social workers, attorneys and judges make trauma-informed decisions about the young people they serve. Through this program, a CASA volunteer reviews the entirety of a child/youth's case file and produces an objective and comprehensive report that highlights key historical events for the young person while in the system.



Program Goals

- Reduce time youth is in the child welfare system
- Improve outcomes for youth in the areas such as: permanency, mental health, education and social supports
- Ease changes/transitions for service providers
- Reduce burnout and compassion fatigue for child welfare professionals
- Consolidate information to observe data trends in the child welfare system
- Create systematic change towards healthier and equitable systems

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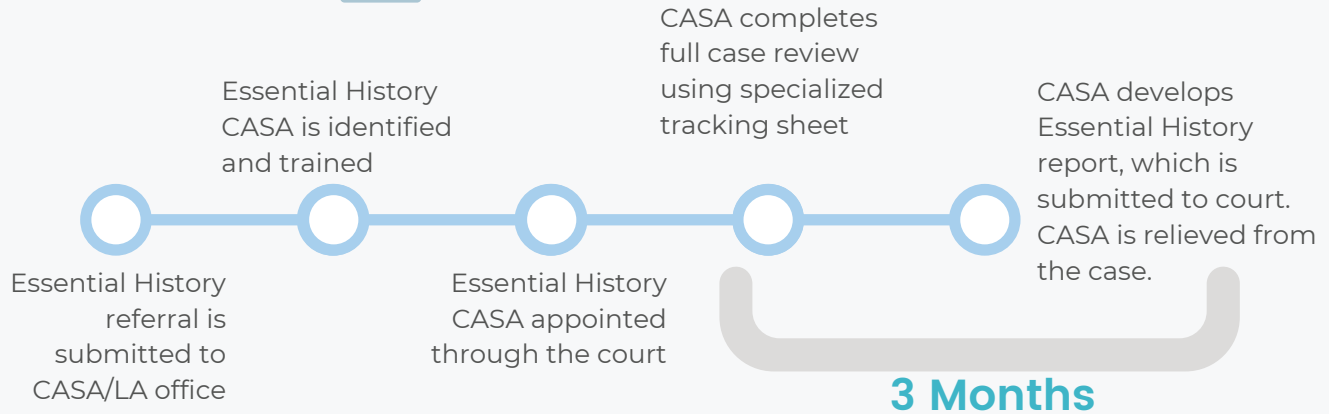
Essential History Program



continued from previous page



Process & Timeline



The Report

Objective & Neutral Language

Information is retrieved from case documents with no additional bias/interpretation.

Strengths-Based

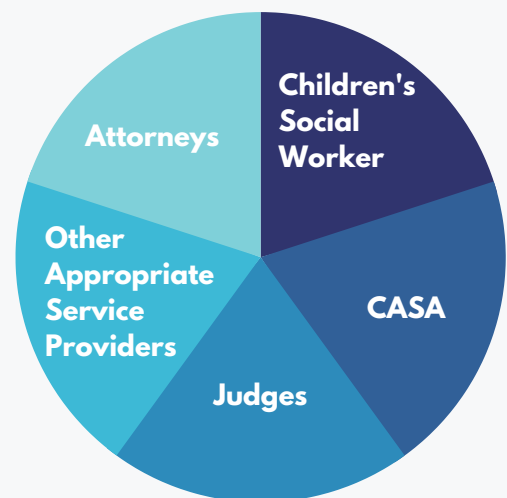
Focus is kept on not creating a negative perception of the youth

Report Content

Report Covers Risk & Protective Factors in the areas of:

- Permanency
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Education
- Family & Social Supports

Who Can Access the Report?



Questions?

essentialhistory@casala.org
Visit Us! www.casala.org



The Los Angeles Paralegal Association (LAPA) reflects the diverse nature of Southern California, and we strive to be as inclusive as possible. As an organization of legal professionals, we hold the ideals of equality and justice in the highest regard. The injustices experienced by the communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are a stark reminder that equality and justice are ideas that have yet to reach fruition in this country. We, as a nation, must do better. LAPA stands in solidarity with the families and friends of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. It is our sincerest desire to see justice is done as the law requires for their tragic deaths.

Diversity and inclusion are LAPA's initiative for 2022. We hold firm in striving to be more inclusive and diverse to reflect the community that we serve and represent. Moreover, LAPA will continue to steadfastly advocate and create initiatives to prepare and support our paralegals.



Housing + Community Investment Department

Attention: City of L.A. Tenants & Landlords

Coronavirus: What You Need to Know
about *L.A.'s Eviction Protections*
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Members Only Benefits

Regional and Networking Sections

LAPA has many opportunities for meeting and connecting with your paralegal colleagues and other legal industry professionals. Such opportunities include seminar and networking events based on geographical locations such as Downtown (Los Angeles), South Bay, West L.A., the San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita, and more. LAPA also provides educational seminars in various legal specialties, including, but not limited to, Litigation, Probate Law, Intellectual Property Law, Corporate Law, Immigration Law, and Ethics. Additionally, with the support of our legal industry partners, LAPA also hosts other networking and charitable events and mixers. Your participation in LAPA is encouraged, so be sure to reach out to a LAPA Section or Committee Chair, develop your leadership and networking skills, and make LAPA an even better association.

Vital Savings

This benefit provides LAPA members a discount program for dental and vision services, long term care, as well as many pharmaceuticals. LAPA has been able to obtain special pricing of Vital Savings discount cards through Aetna. By using the discount cards and Aetna approved providers, LAPA members can save dramatically on the services provided by these professionals. For more information, please visit LAPA's website, www.lapa.org.

Working Advantage

LAPA members may join a program that offers discounts up to 60% on tickets, travel, shopping, and more. LAPA helps you save money on items from clothing to theater tickets to flowers. This benefit is available by logging onto the LAPA website "Members Only" section.

United Insurance Partners

LAPA has teamed with UIP - United Insurance Partners - to bring LAPA members the opportunity to purchase health, dental, and/or vision insurance. When you access UIP through the link provided on the Benefits webpage, you will find an array of insurance products available for you to purchase with companies such as Blue Cross, Aetna, and many other top insurance companies. Please visit LAPA's website, www.lapa.org, for more information.

NALA Affiliation

LAPA is an affiliated member of the National Association of Legal Assistants. NALA is the nation's leading professional association for paralegals. As a member of an affiliated association, the initiation fee for individual membership in NALA is waived for LAPA members. NALA boasts some of its own benefits. Access its NALA Campus Live for online continuing legal education, self-study courses, and preparation for the CLA/CP Exam. Its annual educational convention in July allows you to expand your network beyond your state's borders as you network with other paralegals from around the country, attend educational institutes and member related activities.

Freelance/Contract Paralegal Listing

LAPA provides a "Freelance Paralegals" section on its website to assist LAPA members who are freelance, contract, or independent paralegals, as defined by California Business and Professions Code Section 6450. For a nominal fee of \$60, you can post your contact information on LAPA's website for six months. You can sign up online through the Members Only section of the website.

Membership Database

Available only to LAPA members, the Membership Database is a valuable tool in locating other paralegals or legal professionals with whom you have worked or networked. The Membership Database also provides up-to-date contact information as well as members' legal specialties and geographical areas.

Credit Union

LAPA members are eligible to join Southland Credit Union. Southland Credit Union, with over \$435 million in assets, offers an online presence, a new full-service branch in downtown Los Angeles, an upgraded ATM network and five new proprietary ATMs. Southland Credit Union has expanded its product line by introducing a new high-yielding certificate of deposit, a Rewards Plus program and a market-leading high interest yielding checking account. Southland Credit Union prides itself on outstanding service to its members and has recently earned a 95 percent Member Service satisfaction rating.

Lorman Education

LAPA is dedicated to providing efficient and readily-available continuing education opportunities that meet the needs of our members and enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies. LAPA has partnered with Lorman Education to provide continuing education in a variety of topic areas. LAPA members receive a 20% discount on all orders.





Bet Tzedek Needs **YOUR** Help!

Intake Services Volunteers Sought

Bet Tzedek's Intake Services volunteers conduct pre-screening assessments in order to determine the appropriate course of action for individuals who call seeking legal assistance. Our volunteers are often the first contact our community has with our organization, and we rely on our volunteers to handle a high volume of calls from a diverse population of individuals with a broad range of needs.

Gain Issue Spotting and Client Interview Experience

Under attorney supervision, volunteers develop foundational legal skills, including learning to spot legal issues; to conduct telephone interviews with potential clients dealing with challenging, stressful situations; determining what information provided by the caller is relevant; and to begin to develop judgment of potential cases in a wide array of legal areas. Volunteering with Intake Services also provides first-hand knowledge of the landscape of legal services available in Los Angeles County and exposure to and understanding of the issues faced by the communities we serve.

Commitment: 40+ hours. During the school year, we ask that volunteers commit to working in the Intake Center for 8-10 hours/week for 8-10 weeks. During certain periods, such as winter break, we may be able to accommodate schedules that include a higher number of hours per week for fewer weeks. Work must be completed during normal business hours (M-F, 9am-5pm).

To Apply: Email volunteer@bettzedek.org or call (323) 549-5839 with any questions. Spanish language skills are highly preferred, but not required.

WELCOME NEW & RENEWING LAPA MEMBERS

The following is a listing of legal professionals and paralegal students who joined or renewed their membership in Los Angeles Paralegal Association within the last 30 days. The employer and work telephone number also are included when available. If any information is incorrect, please fax corrections to 866-460-0506, call LAPA at 866-626-LAPA or e-mail updates to info@lapa.org.

VOTING

John B Badon	Haight	johnbbadon@gmail.com
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