

Job Searches for New Paralegals

Paralegals work hard, but finding a paralegal job doesn't have to be hard.

Start with the basics, including job boards for paralegal or legal assistant jobs. Organizations like NALA, your local/state paralegal associations, local schools with paralegal programs, and your state and local bar associations frequently post openings. For example, NALA posts available employment opportunities in its Career Center. Check whether your local or state association also has a job bank.

Job sites include (but are certainly not limited to) Indeed, Career Builder, SnagAJob, LinkedIn, Simply Hired, Monster, Robert Half, Law Jobs, Law Crossing, Martindale, LegalJobs.net, Careers.com, Special Counsel, and many others. Don't forget your state job website, and USAJobs.gov for federal jobs.

Include searches for law, legal, policy, paralegal, litigation support, and justice.

Remember there is no "perfect" job, especially if you are new. Have a clear idea of what you are seeking, but keep in mind that early career moves do not have to be permanent to be valuable. Many seasoned paralegals at adjacent positions like legal assistant, or administrative support, to build skills, prove their value, and transition into paralegal roles...

Everyone talks about networking, but what does that mean? Join your local paralegal association and voluntary bar association, attend CLEs in person as much as possible, talk to other paralegals, volunteer with your local paralegal association, or just in general. People you meet become resources for employment opportunities, and as references for opportunities you apply for. Make a positive impression on others by being interested in what they are doing and what they need because it should not be all about your employment search.

There is a difference between Paralegal and Legal Assistant positions; however, not all firms recognize the difference and may use the terms interchangeably. Read job descriptions and employment offers carefully. If you have a hard time finding a position to apply for, you may want to rethink how you are evaluating the available positions. Do not turn your nose up at an opportunity just because answering phones may be included in the job description.

If possible, research the firm or company you are applying for. Check out the website for descriptions of the firm and attorneys, pictures, whether they list support staff on the website, if they have a blog, etc. You are looking for general information and details on company culture. Do a basic internet search for news involving the company; find out the disposition of cases they file in court; and talk to other members of your local association, especially if you can find someone who works there. Company information is not always available before applying, especially if you are working with a headhunter or staffing agency.

Also, check your state and local bar associations for disciplinary proceedings involving the firm or any of the attorneys working at the firm. You may not want to work for an attorney who has been disciplined with the bar or professionalism board.

Lastly, do not give up! You may not start with your dream job, but keep working towards it. Great opportunities are out there!

