

PARA-LEGAL SPECIALIST I (CRIMINAL LAW)

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: This is para-professional legal work involving responsibility for assisting attorneys in a wide variety of legal duties including, but not limited to research, preliminary fact-finding, interviewing indigent clients, and preparing motions. This title is distinguished from that of Para-Legal Specialist I (Municipal Law) in the field of law in which the work is performed. The specific activities will depend on the area of assignment (e.g. Office of the District Attorney; Office of the Public Defender). The work is performed under the supervision of an attorney or attorneys. Does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

Assists attorneys by preparing and filing standardized legal documents such as affidavits, subpoenas and documents required for court appearances, and, in the absence of an attorney, may answer basic questions concerning same;

Interviews indigent clients in order to gather information to create new files and determine eligibility for services;

Documents preliminary facts with regard to alleged crimes committed such as names and addresses of co-defendants and witnesses;

Researches and prepares motions;

Gathers information and legal documents to support requests for court orders;

Prepares a variety of court orders such as fingerprint, marriage and funeral orders;

Takes depositions and prepares affidavits;

Uses computer applications or other automated systems such as spreadsheets, word processing, calendar, e-mail and database software in performing work assignments;

Assists attorneys in a variety of functions involving daily interactions with court officials, social workers, doctors, clergy, etc.;

Performs legal research in criminal law for attorneys;

Verifies citations in legal documents and papers, as assigned;

Maintains records and makes reports, as required.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Good knowledge of legal terminology, documents, procedures and criminal law office routine; working knowledge of the New York State Penal Law and Criminal Procedure Law; ability to perform legal research; ability to gather information in support of legal documents; ability to use computer applications such as spreadsheets, word processing, e-mail and database software; ability to prepare legal documents appropriate to a District Attorney's or Public Defender's office; ability to understand and carry out complex oral and written instructions; ability to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with a variety of individuals.

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MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- a. Graduation from high school or possession of an equivalency diploma and two (2) years of experience as a Para-Legal Specialist in any law office; or
- b. Graduation from high school or possession of an equivalency diploma and five (5) years of paid work experience in a criminal law office, at least three (3) years of which involved work of a responsible and independent nature and which also included para-legal tasks; or
- c. Graduation from high school or possession of an equivalency diploma and seven (7) years of paid work experience in any law office, at least three (3) years of which involved work of a responsible and independent nature which also included para-legal tasks as a substantial part of such work; or
- d. Completion of at least two (2) years of law school; or
- e. Completion of a minimum of twenty-four (24) college credits in Paralegal Studies*; or
- f. Completion of an approved course of study for Paralegal Specialists; or
- g. Any equivalent combination of the above training and experience.

*Such required credits are to be in core courses required for a degree or certificate as a Paralegal; they shall not include credits in elective courses if such courses are unrelated to Paralegal Studies.