

PARALEGAL SPECIALIST II (CRIMINAL LAW) (SPANISH-SPEAKING)

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. The specific activities will depend on the area of assignment (e.g., Office of the District Attorney; Office of the Public Defender). This title is distinguished from that of Paralegal Specialist I (Criminal Law) in the independence of decision-making and the complexity of assignments. Some of the duties performed in this position require the incumbent to possess speaking and reading ability in Spanish at the fluency level indicated in the Note below. 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;

Prepares legal memoranda and legal briefs;

Maintains records and makes reports, as required;

May prepare bail bonds by interviewing relatives and friends to establish collateral.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Thorough knowledge of legal terminology, documents, procedures and criminal law office routine; good knowledge of interviewing techniques used to gather information; good knowledge of the New York State Penal Law and Criminal Procedure Law; ability to perform legal research; 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.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- a. Graduation from high school or possession of an equivalency diploma and two (2) years of experience as a Paralegal Specialist in any law office; or

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- 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. Possession of a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, Legal Studies, or comparable curriculum; or
- h. Any equivalent combination of the above training and experience.

NOTE: Incumbents are expected to possess a Level II proficiency in Spanish (as defined by the Examinations Division of the State of New York Department of Civil Service) which requires that the incumbent be able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics not requiring specialized vocabulary (e.g. technical engineering, medicine, etc.); can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence in general terms with reasonable ease; possesses adequate comprehension to normal rate of speech; has good control of grammar and errors do not interfere with understanding; can read with understanding standard newspaper, correspondence and official documents.

*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.