

TEXAS PANHANDLE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION
An Affiliate of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.
P. O. Box 1127
Amarillo, TX 79105-1127

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Definition of a Legal Assistant/Paralegal

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 who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ (Month/Day)

Professional Designation: _____ (CLA, CP, TBLS, RP, etc.)

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: (_____) _____ () unlisted Mobile Phone: (_____) _____

E-mail address: _____ *The e-mail address listed here will be the email address to which your monthly newsletter will be sent.*

Supervising Attorney/Firm: _____

Street: _____

Mailing: _____

Employer Phone: (_____) _____ Direct dial #: (_____) _____

Fax number: (_____) _____

Members' office contact information will be shared with TPPA members only. If you do not wish to have your contact information disclosed to the membership, please check here _____.

Membership Term: May 1 – April 30

Please check the TPPA membership category for which you are applying:

____ Active and Freelance \$45 ____ Associate \$30
____ Sustaining (non-voting) \$125 ____ Student (non-voting) \$20

Return pages 1 and 2 of this application along with applicable dues to:

TPPA
Attn: Membership Chair
P. O. Box 1127
Amarillo, TX 79105-1127

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I have read the Definition of a Legal Assistant/Paralegal, the Membership Requirements, and the *Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility of the Texas Panhandle Paralegal Association*; that I meet the qualifications for the membership category for which I am applying; that the statements contained in this membership renewal application are true and correct; and that I have never been convicted of a felony in the State of Texas or any other state. I understand that I must advise the Membership Chairperson in writing or via e-mail within 60 days of any change in my employment or education which affect my membership status.

Dated: _____

Signature of Applicant

ATTORNEY CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that _____ is employed by me as a legal assistant/paralegal, as that term is defined above, and that the duties performed by said legal assistant/paralegal are under my ultimate supervision.

Dated: _____

Signature of Supervising Attorney
State Bar No.: _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FOR FREELANCE APPLICANT

I hereby certify that I am an Active member of TPPA in good standing. I personally know the applicant _____ . To the best of my knowledge, the applicant is currently working as a freelance paralegal under the ultimate supervision of an attorney. I hereby recommend the applicant for membership in TPPA.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Printed Name: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

STUDENT CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I have read the Definition of a Legal Assistant/Paralegal, the Membership Requirements, and the *Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility of the Texas Panhandle Paralegal Association*. I am currently enrolled in an accredited legal assistant/paralegal program leading to a degree or certificate of completion. I authorize any TPPA board member to contact the administrator of this program for verification or clarification of my qualifications for membership. I have never been convicted of a felony in the State of Texas or any other state. I further certify that the statements contained in this application for membership are true and correct. I understand that I must advise the Membership Chairperson in writing or via e-mail within 60 days of any change in my education which affects my membership status.

Dated: _____

Signature of Student Applicant

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Active Member. A person eligible for Active membership shall be currently employed as a paralegal under the ultimate supervision of a licensed attorney and shall also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (i) Any individual who has successfully completed the Certified Legal Assistant/Paralegal (CLA/CP) examination of NALA, and/or the Texas Board of Legal Specialization of the Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas, or
- (ii) Any individual who has graduated from an ABA approved program of study for paralegals, or
- (iii) Any individual who has graduated from a course of study for paralegals which is institutionally accredited but not ABA approved, and which requires not less than the equivalent of 60 semester hours of classroom study, or
- (iv) Any individual who has graduated from a course of study for paralegals other than those set forth in (ii) and (iii) above, plus not less than six months of in-house training as a paralegal, whose attorney-employer attests that such person is qualified as a paralegal, or
- (v) Any individual who has received a baccalaureate degree in any field, plus not less than six months in-house training as a paralegal whose attorney-employer attests that such person is qualified as a paralegal, or
- (vi) Any individual who has a minimum of three years of law related experience under the supervision of an attorney, including at least six months of in-house training as a paralegal, whose attorney-employer attests that such person is qualified as a paralegal, or
- (vii) Any individual who has a minimum of two years of in-house training as a paralegal, whose attorney-employer attests that such person is qualified as a paralegal.

An Active member shall be entitled to one vote on all matters presented to the members.

Freelance Member. A Freelance member is a person eligible for Active membership pursuant to the criteria for Active membership listed above, except that he/she contracts for substantive legal work independently and must be performed under the ultimate supervision of a duly licensed attorney. *Applicants for Freelance membership must submit the Acknowledgment of Applicant form, signed by two Active members. The Supervising Attorney's Verification must be signed by a practicing attorney for whom the applicant has worked within the past twelve months prior to applying for membership.*

A Freelance member shall have all the privileges of an Active member.

Associate Member. A person eligible for associate membership shall meet one of the following criteria:

- (i) is currently employed as a paralegal under the ultimate supervision of a duly licensed attorney, but has not yet satisfied the other criteria of an Active member set out in Section 2.1.a. above;
- (ii) is an Active or Freelance member, who, upon the expiration of a membership year, is no longer employed as a paralegal. Such member may renew as an Associate member pursuant to Section 2.3.c. below; or
- (iii) is a person that is seeking employment as a paralegal, and who would otherwise meet the criteria for Active membership, but has not yet obtained a position as a paralegal.

An Associate member will have the right to vote, hold office or serve as the Chairperson of any Standing Committee. An Associate member may also chair an ad hoc committee at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Student Member. A person eligible for student membership shall be an individual who is enrolled in a course of study leading to a position as a paralegal and does not meet the criteria of an Active, Freelance, or Associate member.

A Student member shall not have the right to vote, hold office, or serve as a Director or Chairperson of any Standing Committee.

Sustaining Member. Those eligible for Sustaining membership shall be those individuals, law firms, corporations, businesses and paralegal program representatives who endorse the paralegal concept, promote the paralegal profession and contribute support to TPPA.

A Sustaining member shall not have the right to vote, hold office, or serve as a Director, Chairperson or member of any Standing Committee.

**CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
OF THE
TEXAS PANHANDLE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION**

PREAMBLE

Fundamental to the success of any professional organization are the integrity of its members and a high standard of conduct. This Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility is promulgated by the Texas Panhandle Paralegal Association and accepted by its members to accomplish these ends.

The paralegal profession is by nature closely related to the legal profession. Although the Code of Professional Responsibility of the State Bar of Texas does not directly govern legal assistants except through a supervising attorney. It is incumbent upon the members of the Texas Panhandle Paralegal Association to know the provisions of the attorneys' code and avoid any action which might involve an attorney in a violation of that code or even the appearance of professional impropriety.

The canons set forth hereafter are intended as a general guide, and the enumeration of these canons does not exclude others of equal importance although not specifically mentioned.

Canon 1. *A legal assistant shall not engage in the practice of law as defined by statutes or court decisions, including but not limited to accepting cases or clients, setting fees, giving legal advice or appearing in a representative capacity in court or before an administrative or regulatory agency (unless otherwise authorized by statute, court or agency rules); the legal assistant shall assist in preventing the unauthorized practice of law.*

Canon 2. *A legal assistant shall not perform any of the duties that attorneys only may perform or do things which attorneys themselves may not do.*

Canon 3. *A legal assistant shall exercise care in using independent professional judgment and in determining the extent to which a client may be assisted without the presence of an attorney, and shall not act in matters involving professional legal judgment.*

Canon 4. *A legal assistant shall preserve and protect the confidences and secrets of a client.*

Canon 5. *A legal assistant shall not solicit legal business on behalf of an attorney.*

Canon 6. *A legal assistant shall not engage in performing paralegal functions other than under the direct supervision of an attorney, and shall not advertise or contract with members of the general public for the performance of paralegal functions.*

Canon 7. *A legal assistant shall avoid, if at all possible, any interest or association which constitutes a conflict of interest pertaining to a client matter, and shall inform the supervising attorney of the existence of any possible conflict.*

Canon 8. *A legal assistant shall maintain a high standard of ethical conduct and shall contribute to the integrity of the paralegal profession.*

Canon 9. *A legal assistant shall maintain a high degree of competency to better assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to provide quality legal services to the public.*

Canon 10. *A legal assistant shall do all other things incidental, necessary or expedient to enhance professional responsibility and the participation of legal assistants in the administration of justice and public service in cooperation with the legal profession.*

Adopted February 27, 1986