

How Paralegals Increase Value

By Kris L. Canaday, Freelance Paralegal

If you read the post, "[The Paralegal Profession: \[Almost\] everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask](#)," you may already be familiar with the American Bar Association's definition of a 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 and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible."

What does this mean to you as an attorney?

It means you're not alone. With the proper education, training, or experience, **a paralegal can complete for you pretty much any task you would generally perform as long as he or she does not directly practice law.**

[While state laws vary in their definition of unauthorized practice of law (UPL), they generally agree that a paralegal cannot give legal advice, represent a client in court, conduct depositions, share in attorney's fees, or negotiate legal rights. (Consult your state law for more information on what is considered UPL in your jurisdiction.)]

The benefits of utilizing a paralegal abound. You manage your time and caseload more effectively when you delegate substantive legal tasks to a paralegal and, by doing so, you increase the amount of time you have to address more pressing matters. Utilizing a paralegal can also help you achieve a work-life balance.

However, you aren't the only one who benefits from your use of a paralegal; your clients also benefit. Because the paralegal billing rate is generally less than that of the attorney's, the **client's legal fees can be reduced dramatically.**

A paralegal can change the way you work, make your practice more efficient, help balance your caseload, and give you more time to focus on pressing matters. It all leads to **less stress and a better work-life balance.**

As clients increasingly seek high-quality legal work at competitive prices, many are demanding that their attorneys utilize a paralegal to minimize legal fees. Because the lower paralegal billing rate can save clients a substantial amount in legal fees, attorneys who utilize paralegals are increasingly sought after.

For more information about the paralegal profession, check out the [ABA Standing Committee on Paralegals](#). There you will find information on the economic benefits of utilizing paralegals, guidelines for the utilization of paralegals, and information on how paralegals can improve your practice.

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