

Colorado Public Defender – Class Specification

Class Title: Paralegal
Class Series: Paralegals
Class Code: R49L11
Reports to: Supervising/Managing Attorney or Supervising/Managing Paralegal
FLSA: Non-exempt
Date: July 1, 2022
Range Min/Max: \$4,025 - \$5,635

GENERAL SUMMARY:

This classification describes the first level within the series wherein employees learn and apply criminal procedures, rules and laws guiding legal practice in criminal defense; and, apply the principles and practices of a paralegal nature to support and assist with a variety of litigation needs. Positions perform duties and assume responsibility for supporting divisions, units, cases and clients under the specific direction, instruction and guidance of a defense attorney. Public Defender paralegals serve as part of the defense team, and as such, are bound by the Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct including rules regarding the attorney-client privilege and client confidentiality.

Positions may be assigned to support attorneys in the Regional Trial Offices, Appellate Division, or State Administrative office. Depending on the assignment, specific tasks may vary.

PRIMARY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Manages and organizes discovery. Converts electronic files to PDF and other formats. Builds trial notebooks, creates digital bookmarks and indexes for easy reference and access by the attorneys and defense team. Creates spreadsheets to manage and organize case records and information including, but not limited to, discovery, witnesses, evidence and exhibits.
- Reviews and summarizes discovery, videos, and witness interviews. Identifies matters of significance and brings to the attention of the defense team. Reviews discovery with the client. Requests and reviews client records, court records and transcripts to complete case files.
- Reviews client charges, pleadings, and court orders and researches legal issues as requested by the attorney such as, searching and reviewing statutes, case law, and legal articles for legal precedent, mitigation and sentencing considerations. May assist attorneys in identifying potential conflicts of interest.
- Searches case-related information as requested by the attorney such as, trending media, news publications, and anything referencing the case, client, codefendants or witnesses that may assist in the preparation of the case, hearing, trial, juror selection or defense strategies.
- Keeps attorneys and defense teams updated as new information is added to the case files.

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- Under the attorney's direction and review, drafts routine and standard motions, briefs and legal memoranda. Proofreads and edits motions prepared by attorneys. Files pleadings and motions. Redacts documents.
- Paralegals in the trial offices may prepare appellate packets and coordinate with the Appellate office to ensure timely provision of materials. Paralegals in Appellate, review appellate packets and communicate with the trial offices and other counsel about additional materials needed to timely file Notices of Appeal or complete the record.
- Tracks and monitors case status and critical timelines on assigned cases to ensure court filings are processed in accordance with established criminal procedures, rules and laws. Keeps attorneys and clients apprised, as appropriate.
- Provides support for hearings or trials as requested by the attorney including, but not limited to, jury selection; tracking of witnesses; tracking of exhibits; client communication; note taking and documentation of events; coordination of trial materials; and, technical assistance with audio/visual platforms for evidence and Power-Point presentations.
- Drafts and responds to correspondence from clients, client family members, and representatives from collateral agencies, to obtain and exchange pertinent information in accordance with policy and procedure.
- Performs a variety of administrative tasks as needed to support the defense team and client, which requires the processing of forms, documents and transactions in accordance with State Office policy and procedure.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Education:

- Paralegal certificate from an ABA approved paralegal studies program or accredited institution;
OR
- One year of a combination of training and experience performing legal support functions such as, organizing and preparing large legal case files for review by an attorney or presentation in court; legal research; preparing drafts of legal documents; and, compiling and analyzing records and data from legal sources, may substitute for the required education.

Preferred Qualifications:

- A bachelor's degree in paralegal studies or related field;
- Experience conducting legal research;
- Experience in a criminal justice or criminal defense environment;
- Experience working in an environment serving indigent populations.

Knowledge:

- English language, grammar and punctuation;
- Basic understanding of legal terminology;
- General understanding of court and legal processes.

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Skills:

- Strong client service focus;
- High degree of professionalism, discretion and confidentiality;
- Strong attention to detail;
- Research skills;
- Strong organizational and time management skills;
- Ability to learn and apply relevant criminal procedures, rules and laws;
- Ability to complete tasks and assignments with frequent interruptions;
- Strong interpersonal skills;
- Ability to establish positive and respectful working relationships with clients, client families and persons of diverse backgrounds;
- Ability to develop and maintain collaborative relationships with members of the Public Defense system, court personnel, witnesses, and representatives of collateral agencies;
- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal;
- Proficiency in standard software applications such as, Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power-Point), internet browsers, and e-mail;
- Ability to learn and utilize Adobe Acrobat and audio/visual software and equipment;
- Ability to process and organize large amounts of information.

Physical Requirements

(Employees must be able to meet the physical demands of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.)

Sedentary Work: Exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects, including the human body. Involves sitting most of the time, but may involve walking or standing for brief periods of time. Requires talking, hearing, seeing, and using electronic devices such as computers.