

LEGAL ASSISTANTS OF THE WESTERN SLOPE

a Colorado nonprofit corporation

**Affiliated with National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. **

Legal Assistants of the Western Slope (LAWS) is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1995 to provide legal assistants, also known as paralegals, working on Colorado's Western Slope with a professional organization to provide local access to continuing education for its members; to encourage a high order of ethical and professional attainment; to promote the paralegal profession; and to inform and educate the public and legal community about the effective utilization of legal assistants.

LAWS maintains four levels of membership: Active Membership, Student Membership, Associate Membership and Sustaining Membership. The qualifications for each level of membership are described below.

Active Membership is open to **a)** individuals with a minimum of two years work experience in the paralegal field in which the majority of work is of a substantive nature, performed under the direct supervision of an attorney and which would otherwise be performed by an attorney; **OR b)** individuals who have a baccalaureate degree, or certificate from an ABA approved, institutionally accredited, or other legal assistant course of study, plus one year of work experience as described in subparagraph a). Active membership is the only level of membership with voting privileges.

Student Membership is open to any individual who is a student in good standing in any college, junior college or other school, pursuing a course of study as a legal assistant.

Associate Membership is open to **a)** individuals with less than two years work experience in the paralegal field in which the majority of work is of a substantive nature, performed under the direct supervision of an attorney and which would otherwise be performed by an attorney; **OR b)** individuals who have a baccalaureate degree, or certificate from an ABA approved, institutionally accredited, or other legal assistant course of study, and less than one year of work experience as described in subparagraph a).

Sustaining Membership is open to those individuals, law firms, corporations or legal assistant program representatives who endorse the legal assistant concept or are actively involved in the promotion of the legal assistant profession who contribute annual dues of \$50.00 or more.

ANNUAL DUES

Active Membership: \$40.00
Student Membership: \$20.00

Associate Membership: \$20.00
Sustaining Membership: \$50.00 or more

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Return completed application with payment to:

Jennifer LeBlanc Hemond

c/o Masters & Sellars, P.C., 152 Colorado Ave., Montrose, Colorado 81401

SECTION 1 - TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL APPLICANTS

I hereby apply for active student associate sustaining membership in the LEGAL ASSISTANTS OF THE WESTERN SLOPE.

I agree to be bound by the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility adopted by the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc., and the bylaws adopted by the Legal Assistants of the Western Slope. I understand that this application is subject to approval by the Legal Assistants of the Western Slope.

Date: _____ Signature _____

How did you hear about LAWS? _____

Are you a member of NALA? _____

SECTION 2 - TO BE COMPLETED BY INDIVIDUALS APPLYING FOR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Home Telephone _____

Mailing Address _____

Employer _____ Office Telephone _____

Address _____ Fax Number _____

E-Mail Address _____ Total years legal experience _____

How long employed as a legal assistant? _____

Formal or special education (name and address of school) or training for present position: _____

Date of graduation _____ If CLA, date certified _____

Check most appropriate description of your employer(s): corporate law department

court or other judicial agency private law office consisting of _____ attorneys and _____ paralegals.

Your specialty, if applicable _____

Current professional or business organization memberships _____

I have a minimum of two years work experience in the paralegal field in which the majority of work I perform is of a substantive nature, performed under the direct supervision of an attorney and which would otherwise be performed by an attorney. (Please submit a copy of your resume.)

I have a minimum of one year work experience in the paralegal field in which the majority of work I perform is of a substantive nature, performed under the direct supervision of an attorney and which would otherwise be performed by an attorney, plus I have a baccalaureate degree, or certificate from an ABA approved, institutionally accredited, or other legal assistant course of study. (Please submit a copy of your resume.)

Employer Attestation (required of all active member applicants). To be completed by employer.

I hereby attest that _____ has been employed by me as a legal assistant for a minimum of (one)(two) year(s) during which time the majority of work (she) (he) has performed has been of a substantive nature, performed under the direct supervision of an attorney and which would otherwise be performed by an attorney.

Name _____ Address _____

Telephone number _____ Signature _____

SECTION 3 - TO BE COMPLETED BY INDIVIDUALS APPLYING FOR STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Home Telephone _____

Mailing Address _____

School Attending _____

Expected Date of Graduation _____

School Attestation (required of all student applicants). To be completed by school program director or instructor.

I hereby attest that _____ is currently enrolled and in good standing in the legal assistant course of study at this school.

School _____

Address _____

Name of Program Director or Instructor _____

Title _____ Signature _____

Date _____

SECTION 4-TO BE COMPLETED BY INDIVIDUALS APPLYING FOR **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

Name _____ Home Telephone _____

Mailing Address _____

Employer _____ Office Telephone _____

Address _____ Fax Number _____

E-Mail Address _____ Total years legal experience _____

How long employed as a legal assistant? _____

Formal or special education (name and address of school) or training for present position: _____

Date of graduation _____ If CLA, date certified _____

Check most appropriate description of your employer(s): corporate law department

court or other judicial agency private law office consisting of _____ attorneys and _____ paralegals.

Your specialty, if applicable _____

Current professional or business organization memberships _____

I have a less than two years work experience in the paralegal field in which the majority of work I perform is of a substantive nature, performed under the direct supervision of an attorney and which would otherwise be performed by an attorney.

I have less than one year work experience in the paralegal field in which the majority of work I perform is of a substantive nature, performed under the direct supervision of an attorney and which would otherwise be performed by an attorney, and I have a baccalaureate degree, or certificate from an ABA approved, institutionally accredited, or other legal assistant course of study.

SECTION 5 - TO BE COMPLETED BY INDIVIDUALS, LAW FIRMS, CORPORATIONS MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD OR LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVES APPLYING FOR **SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP**

Individual Law Firm Corporation Legal Assistant Program Representative

Member of Educational Field Other _____

Name _____ Contact Person _____

Telephone _____ Fax Number _____

Mailing Address _____

E-Mail Address _____

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS

Code of Ethics

Revised 7/95

Preamble

A legal assistant must adhere strictly to the accepted standards of legal ethics and to the general principles of proper conduct. The performance of the duties of the legal assistant shall be governed by specific canons as defined herein so that justice will be served and goals of the profession attained. (See NALA Model Standard and Guidelines for Utilization of Legal Assistants, Section II.)

The canons of ethics set forth hereafter are adopted by the National Association of Legal Assistance, Inc., as a general guide intended to aid legal assistants and attorneys. The enumeration of these rules does not mean there are not others of equal importance although not specifically mentioned. Court rules, agency rules and statutes must be taken into consideration when interpreting the canons.

Definition

Legal assistants, also known as paralegals, are a distinguishable group of persons who assist attorneys in the delivery of legal services. Through formal education, training, and experience, legal assistants have knowledge and expertise regarding the legal system and substantive and procedural law which qualify them to do work of a legal nature under the supervision of an attorney.

Canon I

A legal assistant must not perform any of the duties that attorneys only may perform nor take any action that attorneys may not take.

Canon II

A legal assistant may perform any task which is properly delegated and supervised by an attorney, as long as the attorney is ultimately responsible to the client, maintains a direct relationship with the client, and assumes professional responsibility for the work product. (See NALA Model Standards and Guidelines for Utilization of Legal Assistants, Section IV and VII.)

Canon III

A legal assistant must not (See NALA Model Standards and Guidelines for Utilization of Legal Assistants, Section VI):

- a. engage in, encourage, or contribute to any act which could constitute the unauthorized practice of law; and
- b. establish attorney-client relationships, set fees, give legal opinions or advice or represent a client before a court or agency unless so authorized by that court or agency; and
- c. engage in conduct or take any action which would assist or involve the attorney in a violation of professional ethics or give the appearance of professional impropriety.

Canon IV

A legal assistant must use discretion and professional judgment commensurate with knowledge and experience but must not render independent legal judgment in place of an attorney. The services of an attorney are essential in the public interest whenever such legal judgment is required. (See NALA Model Standards and Guidelines for Utilization of Legal Assistants, Section VII).

Canon V

A legal assistant must disclose his or her status as a legal assistant at the outset of any professional relationship with a client, attorney, a court or administrative agency or personnel thereof, or a member of the general public. A legal assistant must act prudently in determining the extent to which a client may be assisted without the presence of an attorney. (See NALA Model Standards and Guidelines for Utilization of Legal Assistants, Section V.)

Canon VI

A legal assistant must strive to maintain integrity and a high degree of competency through education and training with respect to professional responsibility, local rules and practice, and through continuing education in substantive areas of law to better assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to provide legal service.

Canon VII

A legal assistant must protect the confidences of a client and must not violate any rule or statute now in effect or hereafter enacted controlling the doctrine of privileged communications between a client and an attorney. (See NALA Model Standards and Guidelines for Utilization of Legal Assistants, Section V.)

Canon VIII

A legal assistant must do all other things incidental, necessary, or expedient for the attainment of the ethics and responsibilities as defined by statute or rule of court.

Canon IX

A legal assistant's conduct is guided by bar associations' codes of professional responsibility and rules of professional conduct.