

# Paralegal

Legal legwork is one of the best ways to describe what paralegals do. They support lawyers with behind-the-scenes work and research to prepare court cases and legal documents.

Paralegals need either an associate's degree in paralegal studies or a bachelor's degree with paralegal certification to prepare for this career. They work for state and federal governments, large corporations, and private legal firms.



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*(Feel free to use the back of this sheet for longer answers)*

## What Do Paralegals Do?

Paralegals who work for trial lawyers help attorneys during court cases. They organize case files, do legal research, write legal briefs, and interview clients and witnesses. One thing that they do not do is provide legal advice or present cases in court. Only licensed attorneys can do those things.

Lawyers specialize in different types of law such as real estate, corporate, or immigration. Paralegals support lawyers' efforts by drafting contracts, real estate closings, wills, and other legal documents. A lot of work goes into preparing documents like these. For instance, before a family law attorney can draw up a child custody agreement in a divorce case, a paralegal must research many aspects of the family's situation. All the facts must be in place before a sound legal decision can be made.

## CHALLENGE #1: *If you had this career...*

What kind of training would you need?

Where could you find a job?

How much money could you earn?

Who would you help and how would you make a difference

Why would (or wouldn't) you like doing a job like this?

## CHALLENGE #2: *Think Tank*



A big part of a paralegal's job is getting the facts straight. Every detail in a legal document must be true and accurate.

So imagine that the attorney you are working for is building a case to defend children's right to recess in elementary school. Sure, kids want to play, but why (or why not) is giving children regular breaks important for learning?

See what kinds of facts you can find about the benefits of exercise, fresh air, and free time to children's well-being.