

SOUTH JERSEY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

Dedicated to the Advancement of the
Paralegal Profession



Proud Member of the
National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc.

www.sjparalegals.org

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SOUTH JERSEY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC. 2015-2016 Board of Directors

President..... Sue Merewitz, NJCP
Vice President..... Deborah Naglee, NJCP
Recording Secretary..... Nina Rossman, NJCP
Treasurer..... Judy Alvelo, NJCP
NFPA Primary Representative..... Becky Reedy, NJCP
NFPA Secondary Representative..... Doreen Ziccardi, RP
Parliamentarian..... Vacant
Corresponding Secretary..... Nancy Seldomridge, NJCP

Policy Committees

Delivery of Paralegal Services Vacant paralegalservices@sjparalegals.org	Membership Committee Vacant membership@sjparalegals.org
Nominations & Elections Committee Deborah Naglee, NJCP nominations@sjparalegals.org	Pro Bono Committee Vacant probono@sjparalegals.org
Professional Development Vacant profdev@sjparalegals.org	

Administrative Committees

Continuing Education Vacant Continuinged@sjparalegals.org	Fund Raising/Marketing Vacant fundraising@sjparalegals.org
Job Bank Kristen Brockman jobbank@sjparalegals.org	Meetings Karen Kapsimalis meetings@sjparalegals.org
Newsletter Jodi Paulus newsletter@sjparalegals.org	Programs/Speakers Vacant Programs@sjparalegals.org

Public Relations Vacant publicrelations@sjparalegals.org	Communications Nina Rossman, NJCP communications@sjparalegals.org
Board Advisor Becky Reedy, NJCP boardadvisor@sjparalegals.org	N.J. State Bar Assoc. Paralegal Comm. Becky Reedy, NJCP liaisonnjsba@sjparalegals.org

Definition of a Paralegal

A paralegal is a person qualified through education, training, or work experience, who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, governmental agency, or other entity in a capacity or function which involves the performance, under the ultimate direction and supervision of an attorney. A paralegal handles specifically delegated substantive legal work, which, for the most part, requires a sufficient knowledge of legal concepts that, absent such assistance, an attorney would perform their own.

As stated by the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law, the terms paralegal and legal assistant are considered synonymous and are used interchangeably.

Goals and Objectives of South Jersey Paralegal Association

- To provide professional support to its members;
- To expand recognition of the paralegal profession;
- To offer continuing legal education and educational resources to its members;
- To facilitate improvements in paralegal education;
- To be actively involved in the events surrounding the development of paralegal regulation;
- To improve the cost-effective delivery of legal services; and
- To promote a professional paralegal image.

Membership Categories

Voting membership is open to individuals currently employed or retained as a paralegal who possess **either:** a Bachelor's or Associate's Degree in paralegal studies/technology; a Bachelor's or Associate's Degree in any field plus a paralegal certificate; a certificate from an ABA-approved or AafPE-member paralegal education program; a certificate from a non-correspondence paralegal program which is not ABA-approved or an AafPE-member and two consecutive years, whether prior or current, of paralegal experience; or three consecutive years, whether prior or current, of paralegal experience.

Membership Categories (continued)

Associate membership is open to any individuals who are **either:** employed or retained as a paralegal not meeting the criteria for voting membership; a graduate of a non-correspondence paralegal education program, and currently unemployed; previously employed or retained as a paralegal, but currently unemployed; a paralegal member in good standing of an NFPA-member association other than SJPA; or currently a paralegal manager, coordinator, or administrator, and applying their past experience and/or education as a paralegal in their position.

Student membership is open to a person currently enrolled in a non-correspondence paralegal education program.

Sustaining membership is open to a person, partnership, corporation, or other entity supporting the goals and purposes of the Association.

History and Accomplishments of SJPA

South Jersey Paralegal Association (SJPA) is a non-profit corporation comprised of paralegals, paralegal students, paralegal educational institutions, and other entities that support its goals and the paralegal profession. SJPA was organized to provide professional support, expand recognition of the paralegal profession, offer continuing legal education for paralegals, facilitate improvements in paralegal educational programs, and promote the paralegal image. SJPA continues to strive to achieve these goals, and to formulate new goals as the profession evolves.

Formation of SJPA

In the late 1970s, educational facilities in New Jersey began offering a variety of paralegal education programs. Graduates of local programs then realized the need for a professional support group. The South Jersey Paralegal Association was organized in 1980, and incorporated in May of 1983.

Officers and Committees

The SJPA Board of Directors is made up of officers, various committees, committee chairpersons, and coordinators. All Board members are unpaid volunteers working hard to meet SJPA's goals. SJPA's current officers and committees are listed above. They include membership, delivery of paralegal services, professional development, nominations and elections, and pro bono. SJPA administrative committees include public relations, newsletter, continuing education, programs, job bank, dinner meetings, and fundraising/marketing. SJPA also has special ad hoc committees that are formed as needs arise to perform specific tasks and functions.

Officers are elected by voting members of the Association. The offices are president, vice-president, treasurer, recording secretary, and primary and secondary representatives to the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc. (NFPA). Appointed officers are corresponding secretary and parliamentarian. Officers and policy committee chairs must be voting members in good standing; administrative and ad hoc committee chairs may be associate or student members in good standing.

SJPA has been represented on the New Jersey State Bar Association Paralegal Committee since approximately 1981. This representation enables interaction with members of the Bar and Judiciary, participation in matters of mutual interest, and an opportunity to increase recognition of paralegal participation in the delivery of legal services. In 1994, the NJSBA granted special committee status to the Paralegal Committee. With this recognition, membership to the Committee with voting privileges became open to any practicing paralegal in the state. Presently, the Committee is comprised of paralegals, attorneys, and educators.

We encourage all our members to become involved in our organization. Participation is a key ingredient to the success of SJPA. All board meetings are open to any member and we invite members to attend. If you are interested in membership in the organization, or as a member are interested in filling any of our open positions, please contact any board member for further information.

National Membership

On June 5, 1984, SJPA became the 33rd member association of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc., (NFPA), which now represents paralegal associations nationwide. By this affiliation, SJPA members receive information on issues facing the profession across the country and have a forum to discuss issues of mutual concern. SJPA members have access to a network of paralegal from which they can obtain state-specific information as well as experts in specialty areas of law, etc.

SJPA members are also members of NFPA, and a portion of dues collected are sent to NFPA. Therefore, each SJPA member receives the NFPA publication The National Paralegal Reporter, a journal that contains substantive articles of interest.

NFPA also sponsors testing services provided nationwide for entry-level and experienced paralegals. Working experienced paralegals can take a Paralegal Advanced Competency Examination (PACE), an extensive examination of legal knowledge accrued by education and work experience. Less experienced paralegals can take NFPA's Paralegal Core Competency Examination (PCCE).

Paralegals On-Line

SJPA's website (www.sjpparalegals.org) is a valuable source of information on our Association. Current events, such as dinner meetings, continuing education seminars, social/networking events, Board and committee meetings, and student educational coffeehouses are all listed for handy reference

right at your desktop. You'll also find information about our Association, applications for membership, a photo gallery, our annual CLE – PES (Paralegal Educational Symposium), and our New Jersey Certified Paralegal (NJCP) program.

NFPA also has a website (www.paralegals.org) with information about paralegals on a national level. As a NFPA member, you will have access to special pages designed just for you. NFPA supports networking groups, worldwide resume services, seminar information and publications, and service directories. This forum permits you to exchange ideas, tips, and information on the profession. Networking groups are open to NFPA and American Association for Paralegal Education (“AWE”) members.

Paralegals Involved in Pro Bono and Community Services

Over the years, SJPA members have contributed to local groups providing pro bono paralegal services and community services. Members have worked with the Camden Regional Legal Services (CRLS) assisting attorneys in providing pro bono legal services. SJPA has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, and other local service groups to provide help and assistance to those in the community in need. An annual holiday event is held in December, and SJPA members contribute time, money and/or gifts to help those less fortunate have a happier holiday season.

Professional Development

Through quality paralegal education, paralegals can increase their effective utilization and productivity and assist in the delivery of cost-efficient legal services. To that end, SJPA has participated in facilitating improvements in paralegal educational programs. SJPA works together with local paralegal colleges and programs to educate students and alumni.

SJPA sponsors continuing education events, such as evening CLEs, student coffeehouses, and an all-day educational symposium just for paralegals.

In 1992, SJPA awarded its first paralegal scholarship. SJPA continues to offer an educational scholarship each year to a paralegal student who shows initiative, creativity, dedication to the profession, and ambition towards providing exceptional paralegal services to their employer and the community.

SJPA Newsletter

SJPA publishes a newsletter called The Reporter. Here you will find local, state and national news, opportunities for continuing legal education, classified job listings, and other articles of interest to SJPA members. Information about our dinner meetings and a reservation form are also included.

The Reporter is an excellent means to keep informed about the profession in general, and particularly about the profession in New Jersey.

SJPA Dinner Meetings

SJPA provides opportunities for continuing legal education to its members at its dinner meetings held every other month, beginning in September and ending with our Installation dinner meeting in June. The Association's Annual Meeting is held in May, which is also the meeting at which we elect our officers for the new year. At the June meeting we have our installation of officers. The meetings are held at various locations through southern New Jersey. At each dinner meeting, there are speakers that provide discussions on a variety of legal specialty topics. SJPA also provides local and national news about the profession, a brief business meeting, and an informal opportunity to network.

For the student, a paralegal returning to the profession, an entry-level paralegal, or an experienced professional interested in making new contacts, SJPA's dinner meetings are the perfect place to meet with working paralegals to gain information and new insights. SJPA members willingly share their knowledge and experience with people who are interested in the paralegal field. Our dinner meetings provide a perfect forum for networking and learning.

Continuing Legal Education Seminars

SJPA sponsors what has become an annual all-day event for continuing education known as the **Paralegal Educational Symposium (PES)**. PES offers numerous educational seminars taught by attorneys, educators, and paralegals (including "A Day in the Life of the Paralegal" sessions, a Vendor Exhibitor Hall, continental breakfast, lunch, with snack breaks in between seminars. The seminars are designed for every level of paralegal. So whether you are a student, a practicing paralegal, or an advanced litigation paralegal, there are seminars for all. These events have been so successful that some of the sessions have to be close due to such high attendance.

Accomplishments

In the course of SJPA's history, our members have been instrumental in charting the course of paralegals in New Jersey. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our members, paralegals in our state now have the right to carry business cards and practice independently as contract paralegals.

The New Jersey Supreme Court issued its decision in re: Opinion 24 of the Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law on May 14, 1992. On May 18, 1999, the New Jersey Supreme Court declined to act on the recommendations of its Committee on Paralegal Education and Regulation to implement a licensing scheme. The issue of regulation continues to be debated in many venues.

SJPA has also had a voice in the codification of Rule 4:42-9 (b) as it relates to recoverability of paralegal fees and the ABA commission on non-lawyer practice.

Future Challenges for SJPA

SJPA is proud of the success of the Association that has now existed for over 30 years. SJPA members look forward to continued growth and development of the paralegal profession, continued achievement of the Association's goals and objectives, and strengthening the lines of communication with the Bar and Judiciary. Although there may be new challenges in the future; looking forward, SJPA welcomes the knowledge that continued work and dedication will increase paralegal participation in the delivery of cost-efficient legal services.

SJPA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Automatic individual membership in the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc. (NFPA);
- Subscriptions to the SJPA newsletter, The Reporter, and the NFPA journal, the National Paralegal Reporter;
- Dinner meetings that include a business meeting, seminars on a variety of subjects affecting paralegals, and an opportunity to network with colleagues;
- Access to a local and national repository of information about the profession and the issues surrounding it, such as work-product, unauthorized practice of law, confidentiality, case law, and ethical responsibilities;
- Access to internet and work groups;
- Access to reduced price services that meet the professional needs of paralegals;
- Opportunity to debate and vote on issues which establish SJPA policy at general membership meetings, and opportunity to debate and vote on issues which establish NFPA policy at regional and annual meetings;
- Monitoring of legislation which may affect paralegals by SJPA;
- A local network of paralegals in most legal specialty areas, local networking opportunities, and a national network among paralegal associations through discussions at NFPA meetings, online discussion groups (blogs), correspondence, and exchange of newsletters;
- Continuing paralegal seminars and events;
- Social and networking opportunities;
- Access to vendor information and assistance;

- Mentoring by experienced paralegals; and
- Additional benefits available through NFPA. Please check the NFPA website for updated and additional information.

SJPA Certified Paralegal Program (NJCP)

SJPA is proud of the success of the Association that has now existed for over 30 years. SJPA members look forward to continued growth and development of the paralegal profession, continued

SJPA established its very own program to provide experienced paralegals with a certification and capability of using the designation NJCP after their signatures. It was only after extensive research and development that the program was instituted for those who meet criteria set by a committee of SJPA specifically for this purpose. A trademark of the NJCP name was also obtained.

NATIONAL ALLIED LEGAL ORGANIZATIONS

National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA)

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Web Address: www.paralegals.org/ E-mail: info@paralegals.org

American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE)

19 Mantua Road

Mount Royal, NJ 08061

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Web Address: www.aafpe.org E-mail: info@aafpe.org

American Bar Association (ABA)

Standing Committee on Paralegals

321 North Clark Street

Chicago, IL 60654

Telephone: 312-988-5000 or 800-285-2221

Web Address: www.americanbar.org

Association of Legal Administrators (ALA)

75 Tri-State International, Suite 222

Lincolnshire, IL 60069-4435

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Web Address: www.alanet.org E-mail: membership@alanet.org

International Paralegal Management Association (IPMA)

P.O. Box 659

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