

## **DESCRIPTION of OCP Program**

The Oregon Paralegal Association (OPA) announces the Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP) program, a voluntary certification program administered by the OPA Regulation Committee ("Committee"). This program establishes a standard of competency and accountability for paralegals in Oregon, is an opportunity for Oregon paralegals to validate their qualifications, and offers a credential to paralegals who meet certain education and experience requirements.

For purposes of this program, an Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP) is a person who meets the requirements for this profession and who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity. An OCP performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible<sup>1</sup> and has experience in Oregon matters<sup>2</sup>, such as: applying substantive knowledge of the law and legal procedures in rendering direct assistance to lawyers engaged in legal research; preparing or interpreting legal documents; drafting legal documents; meeting with and interviewing clients and witnesses; recognition, evaluation, organization, analysis, and communication of relevant facts and legal concepts; and other aspects of the operation of a law office, government agency, or in-house counsel. An OCP has successfully completed the application process contained within this policy. It is the intent of OPA to include members of the legal profession whose job duties fit the definition of paralegal but whose job title may be something other than "paralegal."

Applications and supporting documentation for the OCP program can be submitted on the Oregon Paralegal Association's website: <http://www.oregonparalegals.org> or by mail at PO Box 28264, Portland, OR 97228. Questions about the application or the application process can be sent to the Committee Chair(s) at [OCP.Regulation@gmail.com](mailto:OCP.Regulation@gmail.com).

The Application Process is as follows:

The Applicant completes the application and compiles all required attachments for submittal to the Committee. The Application and attachments are submitted to the OPA Committee with the required application fees. The fees for members are \$100.00 and \$200.00 for non-members (such fees may vary from time to time upon approval by the OPA Board of Directors). The Committee reviews the application and attachments for completeness and verifies the contents satisfy the requirements for the selected eligibility path. The Committee reviews the application and determines whether any verification or investigation of the materials is warranted. If a further review or investigation is necessary, the Committee directs the Regulation Chair or Co-Chairs on how to proceed with the investigation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Applicants for the OCP credentials, who are not currently employed as a practicing paralegal, must have been employed as a practicing paralegal in Oregon within the last six (6) months prior to submitting their application; and must submit a written statement accompanying their application regarding this issue and reasons for same, for review by the Regulation Committee. All other requirements remain the same.

<sup>2</sup> Does not exclude paralegals who also perform work in multiple jurisdictions.

Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. The Committee will do its best to review applications within 30 days of receipt, but note that at times of high volume, it may take longer. Credentialing will begin on January 1, 2017, and continue on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month thereafter. As an example, applications received by August 1, 2017, will typically be ready for award on September 1, 2017.

The persons whose applications have been reviewed and approved will be notified that they are Oregon Certified Paralegals and may begin using the OCP designation on the first of the month following that notification. For example, if you receive notification of your OCP credential on September 10, 2017, you are eligible to use it beginning October 1, 2017. The form of the credential should be in the following format: your name, any applicable RP®, CRP™, PP, CP or ACP credential, followed by the OCP. An example would look like this: either "Jane M. Doe, RP®, OCP," or "Jane M. Doe, OCP" without any other credential. It would be good practice to follow it up on a signature block with the full title, "Oregon Certified Paralegal."

New OCPs will receive a certificate from OPA recognizing their achievement, and they will be recognized in the *Paragram* following their credentialing.

After becoming an OCP, individuals wishing to maintain their credential will be required to complete and record 12 CLE credits, including one ethics credit, every two years. The OCP CLE credits may be used in conjunction with CLE requirements for the RP®, CRP®, or other CLE requirements. Oregon Certified Paralegals must renew their credential before the second anniversary of their application approval and before each subsequent two-year anniversary thereafter, by following the renewal procedures outlined separately. The fee for renewal shall be \$50.00 for members and \$100.00 for non-members (such fee may vary from time to time upon approval by the OPA Board of Directors). Renewing OCPs shall complete the renewal form, attach copies of CLE credits, and pay the renewal fee to maintain the credential.

Any questions can be directed to the Committee by e-mailing [OCP.Regulation@gmail.com](mailto:OCP.Regulation@gmail.com).

## **Oregon Certified Paralegal Program (OCP) POLICY**

The Oregon Paralegal Association (OPA) has developed a voluntary certification program as administered by OPA's Regulation Committee (Committee), the Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP) program to establish a standard of competency and accountability for paralegals in Oregon. Voluntary certification of paralegals provides a standard for the profession and recognition of the advancements in the paralegal profession.

For purposes of this program, an Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP) is a person who meets the requirements for this profession and who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity. An OCP performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible<sup>3</sup> and has experience in Oregon matters<sup>4</sup>, such as: applying substantive knowledge of the law and legal procedures in rendering direct assistance to lawyers engaged in legal research; preparing or interpreting legal documents; drafting legal documents; meeting with and interviewing clients and witnesses; recognition, evaluation, organization, analysis, and communications of relevant facts and legal concepts; and other aspects of the operation of a law office, government agency, or in-house counsel. An OCP has successfully completed the application process contained within this policy. It is the intent of OPA to include members of the legal profession whose job duties fit the definition of paralegal but whose job title may be something other than "paralegal."

OPA's voluntary certification program is an opportunity for paralegals to validate their qualifications and offers a credential to paralegals that meet certain education and experience requirements as outlined below:

An Oregon Certified Paralegal is a person who meets the following criteria:

1. Is at least 18 years of age; and
2. Fits one of the minimum education and experience requirements outlined below:
  - The applicant has obtained an associate's degree in paralegal studies from an ABA or institutionally accredited institution and has 4 years of substantive paralegal experience.
  - The applicant has obtained a baccalaureate degree in paralegal studies from an ABA or institutionally accredited college or university and has 2 years of substantive paralegal experience.
  - The applicant has received a baccalaureate degree in any discipline from an accredited college or university, has obtained a post-baccalaureate certificate in paralegal studies from an ABA or institutionally accredited college or university, and has 2 years of substantive paralegal experience.
  - The applicant has received a baccalaureate degree in any discipline from an

---

<sup>3</sup> Applicants for the OCP credentials, who are not currently employed as a practicing paralegal, must have been employed as a practicing paralegal in Oregon within the last six (6) months prior to submitting their application; and must submit a written statement accompanying their application regarding this issue and reasons for same, for review by the Regulation Committee. All other requirements remain the same.

<sup>4</sup> Does not exclude paralegals who perform work in multiple jurisdictions.

accredited college or university, and has 4 years of substantive paralegal experience.

- The applicant is a PACE Registered Paralegal® through NFPA.
- The applicant is a Certified Paralegal or Advanced Certified Paralegal through NALA.
- The applicant is a Professional Paralegal through NALS.
- The applicant is a CORE Registered Paralegal™ through NFPA and has 4 years of substantive paralegal experience.
- Prior to 01/01/2021, the applicant has received a high school diploma or its equivalent, has a minimum of 10 years of substantive paralegal experience, and has completed a minimum of 12 CLE credits in the two years prior to application.
- The applicant was or is an active duty, retired or former military personnel qualified in a military operation specialty as a paralegal, has a minimum of 4 years of substantive paralegal experience with at least one year of that experience in Oregon matters, has completed 1.0 hour of Ethics CLE within the year preceding the application;
- The applicant has graduated from an accredited law school, is not currently licensed as an attorney in any state, has not been disbarred or suspended from the practice of law by any jurisdiction, and has a minimum of 2 years of substantive paralegal experience immediately preceding their application.

3. Provides proof of continuing learning education courses as outlined in the program requirements; and
4. Abides by the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct, the NFPA's Model Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility (NFPA Model Rules) and OPA's Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct; and
5. Submits the required documentation and pays the required fees; and
6. Complies with other such rules and regulation as enacted by OPA, the Oregon State Bar and other state and federal regulation(s); and
7. Who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity with a practice in Oregon and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible in Oregon matters.
8. Is not deemed ineligible by any of the criteria outlined in the Application Denial section of the OCP application process.

The application fee for members is \$100.00 and \$200.00 for non-members (such fee may vary from time to time upon approval by the OPA Board of Directors), with the funds being administered by OPA as outlined in the Specific Financial Policy in the OPA Policies and Procedures Manual. Qualified applicants will receive the credential from the Committee as outlined in the OCP Application Process. Once approved, the applicant can use the "OCP" credential following their name.

The applicant will submit an affidavit verifying the following:

They have read the accompanying Oregon Certified Paralegal Program policy, including the continuing education requirement and OPA's Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct, and agree to comply with same.

They consent to a confidential verification or investigation of third parties

information by OPA for the purpose of determining whether they fulfill the requirements for the OCP certification.

Upon registration as an OCP, the applicant will receive a certificate. The applicant agrees to surrender the certificate if registration is revoked or not renewed and will discontinue the use of the OCP credentials.

The applicant agrees to pay all fees required by OPA for registration of the application and renewal of the OCP credential.

The applicant agrees to inform OPA promptly of any fact or circumstance that would render them ineligible for the OCP credential or for renewal of their OCP credential.

The applicant affirms the contents of their application and its attachments, and that the material representations of work experience and/or education and/or certification as set forth therein are true and correct.

The applicant encloses \$100.00/ \$200.00 as the application fee, and acknowledges this fee is nonrefundable regardless of the disposition of their application.

OCPs must obtain a minimum of 12 CLE credits, including one ethics credit, every two years. OCPs must renew their credential prior to the second anniversary of their application approval, and before each two-year anniversary thereafter. The fee for renewal shall be \$50.00 for members and \$100.00 for non-members (such fee may vary from time to time upon approval by the OPA Board of Directors). Renewing OCPs shall complete the renewal form, attach copies of CLE completion and pay the renewal fee prior to the renewal deadlines to maintain the credential.

The following processes are incorporated into this policy:

1. Application Process:

- Applicant completes application and compiles all required attachments for submittal to the Committee.
- Application and attachments are submitted to the OPA Committee.
- The Committee, or designee, confirms that the appropriate fees required are submitted with the application.
- The Committee reviews the application and attachments for completeness and verifies the contents satisfy the requirements for the selected eligibility path.
- The Committee, upon review of the application and attachments, determines whether any verification or investigation of the materials is warranted.
- If further verification or investigation is necessary, the Committee directs the Regulation Chair or Co-Chairs on how to proceed with the investigation.

2. Award Process

- Applications approved by the Committee to grant the OCP credentials shall be forwarded to the Regulation Chair or Co-Chairs on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month in which the application is approved.

- The Regulation Chair or Co-Chairs shall make one final review of all applications prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month in which the application is approved.
- New OCPs shall be notified by the Committee, or designee, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month that their applications have been approved and they may begin using the OCP credentials.
- The Committee, or designee, shall prepare certificates for each new OCP to be sent out no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month in which the applicant is notified of their OCP status.
  - A communication shall accompany the certificate outlining the renewal process and renewal deadline.

### 3. Application Denial

- If, after verification and/or investigation, it is determined the applicant does not meet the minimum standards for the OCP program, the Committee or designee shall contact the applicant via e-mail describing the reason for application denial and providing the option for a written appeal to be submitted to the OPA Board of Directors within 30 days. There is no charge for an appeal to the Board.
- The applicant shall have the option to reapply (with a new application fee), with supporting documentation 30 days after a denial.
- If the applicant is subsequently approved for credentialing, the application will be sent back to the Committee by the Board of Directors and the prescribed Award Process shall be followed.
- Four items of note are grounds for immediate denial of an application:
  - a. Suspension or disbarment from the practice of law in any state or jurisdiction.
  - b. Conviction of a felony in any state or jurisdiction in which civil rights have not been restored.
  - c. A finding of engagement in the unauthorized practice of law in any state or jurisdiction.
  - d. Termination or revocation of any registration or license from a governmental agency or by professional organization, court, disciplinary board or agency in any jurisdiction.

### 4. CLE credits accepted for applications and renewals include:

- Any State Bar sponsored CLE.
- Any NFPA issued or approved CLE.
- Any NALA issued or approved CLE.
- Any NALS issued or approved CLE.
- Any OPA issued or approved CLE.
- Any offered by an accredited institution or entity authorized to offer legal education opportunities.

### 5. Renewals

- After being granted the OCP credential, individuals wishing to maintain their credential will be required to complete and record 12 CLE credits hours with the OPA Committee, including one ethics credit, every two years. The required OCP CLE credits may be used in conjunction with CLE requirements for other paralegal credentialing programs such as, the RP®, CRP®, or other CLE

requirements. Oregon Certified Paralegals must renew their credentials prior to the second anniversary of their application approval by following the renewal procedures outlined separately and before each subsequent two-year deadline thereafter.

- The fee for renewal shall be \$50.00 for members and \$100.00 for non-members (or other amount approved).
- Renewing OCPs shall complete the renewal form, attach evidence of the completed CLEs in the form of attendance certificates or similar documentation and pay the renewal fee prior to the renewal deadline in order to maintain their credentials.

#### 6. Disciplinary Action or Revocation of Credential

- Non-renewal of the OCP credentials will result in the automatic revocation and use of the OCP credential.
- A late fee of \$25 for members and \$50 non-members must accompany the renewal application required fees and forms for any OCP who has allowed their credentials to lapse for more than 30 days after the renewal deadline. Once the application fee and required forms have been received and processed by the Committee, the OCP credential will be reinstated.
- Any other disciplinary actions or processes are TBD as approved and directed by the Board of Directors, based upon recommendations by of the Committee, including but not limited to; requesting a determination from the OPA Ethics Committee and/or reporting issues to the Oregon State Bar.

**Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP)  
APPLICATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Former Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you 18 years or older?    Yes                  No



I. Eligibility Requirements

**Grounds for ineligibility. IF YOU ANSWER YES TO ANY OF THE BELOW, PLEASE PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER.**

Have you ever been suspended or disbarred or resigned in lieu of discipline from the practice of law in any state or jurisdiction?  Yes  No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony in any state or jurisdiction for which your civil rights have not been restored?  Yes  No

Have you ever been found to have engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in any state or jurisdiction?  Yes  No

Have you ever had a registration or license to practice any profession issued by a governmental entity or professional organization terminated or revoked for disciplinary reasons by a professional organization, court, disciplinary board, or agency in any jurisdiction?  Yes  No

## II. Qualifying Criteria.

Indicate the criteria by which you seek certification and complete the appropriate sections of this application. You must only complete the section that applies to you. If you are eligible to apply for the credentials based on more than one criterion, choose the one criterion under which you wish to apply. If your criteria are education and work experience, you must complete both the education and work experience sections. If your qualifying criteria are certification, you must complete the certification and work experience sections. With either qualifying criteria, the attesting attorney(s) must complete the attorney attestation form included with the application or provide evidence of other qualifying employment.

- The applicant has obtained an associate's degree in paralegal studies or an equivalent paralegal certificate from an ABA approved or institutionally accredited educational institution and has 4 years of substantive paralegal experience.
- The applicant has obtained a baccalaureate degree in paralegal studies from an ABA or institutionally accredited college or university and has 2 years of substantive paralegal experience.
- The applicant has received a baccalaureate degree in any discipline from an accredited college or university, has obtained a post-baccalaureate certificate in paralegal studies from an ABA or institutionally accredited college or university, and has 2 years of substantive paralegal experience.
- The applicant has received a baccalaureate degree in any discipline from an accredited college or university, and has 4 years of substantive paralegal experience.
- The applicant is a PACE Registered Paralegal® through NFPA.
- The applicant is a Certified Paralegal or Advanced Certified Paralegal through NALA.
- The applicant is a Professional Paralegal through NALS.
- The applicant is a CORE Registered Paralegal™ through NFPA and has 4 years of substantive paralegal experience.

- ❑ Prior to 01/01/2021, the applicant has received a high school diploma or its equivalent, has a minimum of 10 years of substantive paralegal experience, and has completed a minimum of 12 CLE credits in the two years prior to application.
- ❑ The applicant was or is an active duty, retired or former military personnel qualified in a military operation specialty as a paralegal, has a minimum of 4 years of substantive paralegal experience with at least one year of that experience in Oregon matters, has completed a minimum of 1.0 hour of Ethics CLE within the year preceding the application.
- ❑ The applicant has graduated from an accredited law school, is not currently licensed as an attorney in any state, has not been disbarred or suspended from the practice of law by any jurisdiction, and has a minimum of 2 years of substantive paralegal experience immediately preceding their application.

III. Education

**You must provide either a copy of your diplomas or official transcripts with your application, if using education as part of your qualifying criteria.**

Full Name and Location of School: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Accrediting Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Degree Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Education Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. Work Experience

Attach additional sheets if necessary to complete the verification of years of service. For purposes of this program, an Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP) is a person who meets the requirements for this profession and who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity. An OCP performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible<sup>5</sup> and has experience in Oregon matters<sup>6</sup>, such as: applying substantive knowledge of the law and legal procedures in rendering direct assistance to lawyers engaged in legal research; preparing or interpreting legal documents; drafting legal documents; meeting with and interviewing clients and witnesses; recognition, evaluation, organization, analysis, and communication of relevant facts and legal concepts; and other aspects of the operation of a law office, government agency, or in-house counsel. An OCP has successfully completed the application process contained within this policy. It is the intent of OPA to include members of the legal profession whose job duties fit the definition of paralegal but whose job title may be something other than "paralegal."

Please attach one EMPLOYING/SUPERVISING ATTORNEY ATTESTATION on the next page for each employer showing substantive paralegal experience.

Employer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment Status (Full Time, Part Time (identify how many hours per week you worked), Temporary): \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>5</sup> Applicants for the OCP credentials, who are not currently employed as a practicing paralegal, must have been employed as a practicing paralegal in Oregon within the last six (6) months prior to submitting their application; and must submit a written statement accompanying their application regarding this issue and reasons for same, for review by the Regulation Committee. All other requirements remain the same.

<sup>6</sup> Does not exclude paralegals who also perform work in multiple jurisdictions.

## EMPLOYING/SUPERVISING ATTORNEY ATTESTATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am authorized to certify the following in connection with an application for certification under the Oregon Paralegal Association's Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP) Program.

I am/have been the supervising attorney for \_\_\_\_\_, the applicant herein. I have/had direct supervision over the applicant, during which time I was a member in good standing of the Oregon State Bar.

I hereby certify that the applicant has fulfilled the following paralegal work experience requirement necessary for the OCP credentials and  is currently  or was (check one) primarily performing paralegal work on Oregon matters<sup>7</sup>. For purposes of this program, an Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP) is a person who meets the requirements for this profession and who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity. An OCP performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible<sup>8</sup> and has experience in Oregon matters<sup>9</sup>, such as: applying substantive knowledge of the law and legal procedures in rendering direct assistance to lawyers engaged in legal research; preparing or interpreting legal documents; drafting legal documents; meeting with and interviewing clients and witnesses; recognition, evaluation, organization, analysis, and communication of relevant facts and legal concepts; and other aspects of the operation of a law office, government agency, or in-house counsel. An OCP has successfully completed the application process contained within this policy. It is the intent of OPA to include members of the legal profession whose job duties fit the definition of paralegal but whose job title may be something other than "paralegal."

- \_\_\_\_\_ months from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
- At least 1 year of substantive paralegal work experience in Oregon from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
- At least 2 years of substantive paralegal work experience in Oregon from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
- At least 3 years of substantive paralegal work experience in Oregon from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
- At least 4 years of substantive paralegal work experience in Oregon from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ date of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Attorney/Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

<sup>7</sup> Does not exclude paralegals who performs paralegal work in multiple jurisdictions.

<sup>8</sup> Applicants for the OCP credentials, who are not currently employed as a practicing paralegal, must have been employed as a practicing paralegal in Oregon within the last six (6) months prior to submitting their application; and must submit a written statement accompanying their application regarding this issue and reasons for same, for review by the Regulation Committee. All other requirements remain the same.

<sup>9</sup> Does not exclude paralegals who perform work in multiple jurisdictions.

---

Print Name

---

Title

---

Oregon Bar Number

V. Certification

- Successful completion of the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam (PACE certification as offered by the National Federation of Paralegal Associations).
- Successful completion of the Certified Paralegal or Advanced Certified Paralegal Exam (CP or ACP examination offered by the National Association of Legal Assistants).
- Successful completion of the Professional Paralegal Exam (PP examination offered by NALS).
- Successful completion of the Paralegal CORE Competency Exam (CORE certification as offered by the National Federation of Paralegal Associations).

Please attach a copy of the certificate and/or renewals.

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Still in Good Standing (y/n): \_\_\_\_\_

VI. Affidavit of Applicant

I have read the accompanying Oregon Certified Paralegal (OCP) Program policy, including the continuing education requirement and OPA's Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct, and agree to comply with same.

I consent to a confidential inquiry of third parties by OPA for the purpose of determining whether I fulfill the requirements for certification.

Upon registration as an OCP I will receive a certificate. I agree to surrender the certificate if the credential is revoked or not renewed.

I agree to pay all fees required by OPA.

I agree to inform OPA promptly of any fact or circumstance that would render me ineligible for registration as an OCP or for renewal of my OCP credential.

I affirm the contents of this application and its attachments, and I affirm that the material representations of my work experience and/or education and/or certification as set forth herein are true and correct.

I am enclosing my payment for \$100.00/ \$200.00 as the application fee. I understand this fee is nonrefundable regardless of the disposition of my application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print or Type Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

State of Oregon

County of \_\_\_\_\_

This record was signed and sworn before me on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ by (name of individual) \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Signature – State of Oregon

(Official Stamp)