



State Bar of New Mexico  
Paralegal Division

**Membership Qualifications**

The Supreme Court of New Mexico officially created the Division in February 1995 by amending [Rule 24.101.1 NMRA](#) of the Rules Governing the New Mexico Bar. In January 2004, the revised Rules Governing Paralegal Services were adopted setting forth the following qualifications for membership:

A person may become a member of the Paralegal Division if the person is employed as a paralegal in compliance with the definition of a paralegal found at [Rule 20-102 NMRA](#) of the Rules Governing Paralegal Services and the person meets one or more of the following qualifications:

(1) Graduation from a paralegal program that is either:

a) approved by the American Bar Association; b) an associate degree program; c) a post-baccalaureate certificate program in paralegal studies\*; or d) a bachelor's degree program.

(2) Graduation from a post-secondary legal assistant program which consists of a minimum of sixty (60) semester hours or equivalent, as defined by the American Bar Association Guidelines for the Approval of Paralegal Education Programs, of which at least eighteen (18) semester hours or equivalent are general education courses and eighteen (18) semester hours or equivalent are legal specialty courses;

(3) A bachelor's degree in any field plus two (2) years of substantive law-related experience under the supervision of a licensed attorney. Successful completion of at least fifteen (15) semester hours of substantive paralegal courses may be substituted for one year of law-related experience;

(4) Graduation from an accredited law school and not disbarred or suspended from the practice of law by the State of New Mexico or any other jurisdiction; or

(5) Certification by the National Association of Legal Assistants, Incorporated, the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Incorporated or other equivalent national or state competency examination plus at least one (1) year of substantive law-related experience under the supervision of a licensed attorney.

Applicants must certify that they:

(1) are not a convicted felon;

(2) have not been convicted in any state or federal court of any crime involving or related to a charge of moral turpitude;

(3) have not been the subject of and reprimanded or otherwise censured in any disciplinary or other similar proceeding involving my business affairs or other conduct involving the public;

(4) have not had a professional business license granted to me by the State of New Mexico, any other state, the federal government, or an agency of any of the foregoing revoked or suspended for breach of ethics or a charge relating to my character or personal fitness; and

(5) are otherwise mentally and morally fit to participate in the State Bar of New Mexico.

Applicants must further attest that they meet the following employment qualifications found at [Rule 24-101.1 NMRA](#):

- (1) contracts with or is employed by an attorney, law firm, corporation, governmental agency or other entity;
- (2) performs substantive legal work as defined in [Rule 20-102 NMRA](#); and
- (3) meets one or more of the educational and experience qualifications set forth above.

Persons interested in applying for membership in the Paralegal Division must Complete, IN FULL, all pages of the application form below. ***Only properly completed applications with the required documents attached will be processed.***

#### Membership Application

*\* a post-baccalaureate certificate program is defined as a program that requires a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite to enrollment in the program and the program itself consists of a minimum of 18 semester hours of substantive legal courses. A semester hour is equivalent to 15 hours of classroom time of at least 50 minutes in duration. Applicants under this category must provide 1) an official school transcript and 2) an original course catalog or an original letter from the school registrar or program director attesting that the program is a post-baccalaureate certificate program requiring a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite and meets the minimum semester/clock hour requirement. Application forms submitted under Category 1(c) will be considered incomplete without submission of the above documentation.*