

The Certified Paralegal Program

Section 5 – Certification Maintenance

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This information appears on the NALA website (www.nala.org) under
“Certification.” Please check the web site frequently for updated information.



The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) has granted accreditation to the NALA Certified Paralegal program for demonstrating compliance with the NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs. Accreditation is effective through April 30, 2019. To maintain accreditation, NCCA requires annual reports of all certification programs. Re-accreditation is

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Certification Maintenance Policies and Procedures for Certified Paralegals

The Certified Paralegal credential is valid for a period of five years. Certified Paralegals may renew their certification after complying with the ethical and continuing legal education (CLE) requirements set forth below. The five-year period is enforced as a reasonable timeframe for staying abreast of the rapid changes in law and procedures in the legal field.

Ethical Standards

Certified Paralegals may lose the CP credential if they have a felony conviction or if they violate the NALA Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility.

If NALA is aware that a Certified Paralegal has been accused of a violation of the NALA Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility, NALA will submit the information to the Certifying Board as soon as practicable.

All Certified Paralegals must submit, with their renewal application, a signed affidavit that they have not been convicted of a felony during the prior five-year period.

CLE Hours Required

Certified Paralegals must complete a total of 50 hours of continuing legal education during each five-year certification period. Certifications will only be eligible for renewal after timely submission of proof of CLE compliance in accordance with these rules.

Five of the 50 CLE hours completed must address the topic of legal ethics. For purposes of CLE, legal ethics is defined as the code of professional responsibility detailing the moral and professional duties required in the delivery of legal services.

Of the 45 remaining CLE hours, a maximum of 10 hours may address non-substantive areas (including, but not limited to, law office management, computer programs or applications, communications, and office technology). Of these 10 non-substantive hours, up to two hours may address the areas of mental health or prevention of substance abuse.

CLE hours may be awarded for participation in events, classes, or special experiences that occur after the initial certification or recertification date. If more than 50 hours are recorded during a five-year period, excess hours may not be applied to a subsequent period for active Certified Paralegals. However, if excess CLE hours are acquired during the month renewal is due, the excess hours may be applied to the new period.

Acceptable CLE

The Certifying Board will only award CLE hours for education that is relevant to the work of paralegals. Reported CLE hours that are not pre-approved are subject to verification by the Certifying Board.

Types of CLE Programs and Calculation of Hours

1. Seminars, Workshops, and Conferences

Sponsors: The Certifying Board approves programs for CLE hours on a per-program basis. Pre-approval of all programs offered by a particular sponsor is not available. Sponsors for CLE events may include paralegal education providers, bar associations, attorney organizations, law firms, and paralegal associations.

Speakers: To qualify for CLE hours, programs are required to feature a qualified presenter whose relevant education, experience, certification, or license is stated in the program materials.

Minimum Length: A program or seminar that offers a minimum of 50 minutes of instruction qualifies for one hour of education.

Types of Programs: Hours may be awarded for participation in live CLE programs, including in-house employer programs or training. Online programs may qualify, including web-based live programs and web-based self-study programs. In addition, hours may also be awarded for self-study audio or video recordings of relevant CLE events. Hours are not available for reading articles or books.

CLE Hours Calculation: Certified Paralegals will be awarded one CLE hour for each hour completed at a seminar or workshop. Hours are not awarded for session breaks or lunch breaks. If a luncheon includes an educational component, time is awarded only for the actual presentation.

Filing Requests for CLE Hours: Requests for participation in seminars, workshops, or conferences must be supported by the following:

- Certified Paralegal Contact Information
- Type of Event
- Date of Event
- Name of Event
- Location of Event
- Event Sponsor
- Sponsor Contact Information
- Event Program or Agenda

The Certifying Board will accept *verifications of attendance* of a CLE event submitted by an event sponsor. Certified Paralegals must still report all of their own hours according to these rules. The description of the event should include the items listed above and a typewritten list of names of the Certified Paralegals who attended the event. Sign-in sheets and hand written names are discouraged. NALA will not verify hours for illegible names.

2. College Courses

CLE Hours: Hours may be awarded for completion of a college course offered by a college or university that is regionally accredited so long as a grade of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or a grade C or above, is achieved.

Types of Courses: Hours may be awarded for completing legal ethics courses or courses in specific practice areas as part of a paralegal or law school curriculum. Some business courses may qualify for non-substantive hours. All courses must be relevant to the work of paralegals.

CLE Hours Calculation: Certified Paralegals will be awarded 10 CLE hours for each academic quarter unit completed and 15 CLE hours for each academic semester unit completed.

Filing Requests for CLE Hours: Requests for participation in college courses must be supported by the following:

- Certified Paralegal Contact Information
- Course Description
- Unit Value – Specifying Quarter or Semester Credit
- Transcript – Unofficial Acceptable

3. Advanced Paralegal Certifications and State Specialty Certifications

Sponsors: The Certifying Board will award CLE hours to Certified Paralegals upon successful completion of an advanced professional certification program for paralegals.

Types of Programs: Hours may be awarded for the completion of programs administered by a national organization for paralegals, a state paralegal organization working alone or together with a state bar association, and which include completion of a written examination. Product or software certifications qualify as non-substantive seminars, workshops, or conferences.

CLE Hours Calculation: Certified Paralegals will be awarded 20 hours for each Advanced Paralegal Certification obtained. Certified Paralegals who pass a state certification exam will be awarded two hours for each hour allotted to take the exam.

Filing Requests for CLE Hours: Requests for participation in Advanced Paralegal Certification programs or state specialty paralegal certification programs must be supported by the following:

- Certified Paralegal Contact Information
- Course Description
- Hours Completed in the Course or in Taking Exam
- Sponsor of Certification Program
- Copy of Certificate or Certification Issued

4. Presenting or Teaching

Types of Teaching: Hours may be awarded for presenting a seminar or workshop, or for teaching a course in a college-level paralegal program on a subject of substantive law or procedure related to the work of paralegals.

CLE Hours Calculation: Certified Paralegals will be awarded two hours for every one hour of instruction. Hours for seminars or courses with more than one instructor will be awarded pro-rata based upon the number of instructors.

Filing Requests for CLE Hours: Requests for presenting or teaching must be supported by the following:

- Certified Paralegal Contact Information
- Course or Seminar Description
- Number of Hours Spent Instructing
- Sponsor of Certification Program

5. Published Articles

Types of Writings: Hours may be awarded for publishing an article of at least 1,000 words in a legal periodical or book on a subject of substantive law or procedure related to the work of paralegals.

CLE Hours Calculation: Certified Paralegals will be awarded 10 CLE hours for an individually-authored article of at least 1,000 words published in a legal publication in accordance with NALA Facts & Findings Editorial Guidelines (2014) or similar published guidelines. Certified Paralegals will be awarded 12 CLE hours for an article of 1,500 or more words. Hours for articles with more than one author will be awarded pro-rata based upon the number of authors and words.

Filing Requests for CLE Hours: Requests for publishing must be supported by the following:

- Certified Paralegal Contact Information
- Copy of Article in Publication
- Word Count

6. Training for Volunteer Activities

Types of Training: Hours may be awarded for time spent in substantive legal training to volunteer paralegal services.

CLE Hours Calculation: Certified Paralegals will be awarded one hour for each hour spent in a classroom, small group, or one-on-one training to learn how to provide volunteer paralegal services.

Filing Requests for CLE Hours: Requests for volunteer training must be supported by the following:

- Certified Paralegal Contact Information
- Name of Sponsor and Training
- Date(s) and Time(s) of Completed Trainings
- Total Number of Hours of Training and Instruction
- Training Agenda or Syllabus
- Sponsor Contact Information
- Verification of Completion from Sponsor

Reporting Hours in the Area of Legal Ethics

To have reported hours satisfy the legal ethics CLE requirement, the sponsor's program must state the seminar or workshop included a legal ethics component and state the specific number of hours of instruction in the area of legal ethics.

Filing Procedures for All Types of CLE

Certified Paralegals may submit requests for CLE hours anytime during their five-year certification period. Certified Paralegals may submit requests on a "Certificate of Attendance Form" provided by the Certifying Board or complete the online CLE request form on the NALA website. Online requests are not required to provide the supporting documents listed above unless NALA requests them.

The Certifying Board may request supporting documents to verify CLE hours reported up to one year after the date the hours were reported. The supporting documents required for each type of CLE are listed above. Reported hours will be rejected if the supporting documents requested are not provided within the timeframe given in the Certifying Board's verification request.

Reported CLE hours are classified by the Certifying Board as either Undocumented or Confirmed. Hours are classified as Undocumented when they are initially reported online by Certified Paralegals, unless the hours are pre-approved. Undocumented hours are subject to verification by the Certifying Board. Hours that are pre-approved or verified by the Certifying Board or were reported more than one year earlier are classified as Confirmed. Confirmed hours are no longer subject to verification by the Certifying Board.

Regardless of classification, Certified Paralegals who file fraudulent CLE claims or forms, falsely represent a course or program, or misrepresent hours of instruction may be subject to discipline as set forth in the Rules for Disciplinary Proceedings.

Pre-Approval of CLE Events

Certified Paralegals or seminar providers may seek pre-approval of an event for CLE hours.

Pre-Approval of Requests by Certified Paralegals: Certified Paralegals may contact NALA Headquarters in advance of a program to seek information about these requirements and to determine whether participation in a CLE program would meet the Certifying Board's requirements.

Pre-Approval of Programs by Seminar Providers: Seminar providers may complete a "Request for Approval of Continuing Legal Education Programs for Certified Paralegals" form which is on the NALA website. Upon receipt of the form, and the approval fee, the Certifying Board will advise the program sponsor if the program is approved and the maximum number of CLE hours that may be awarded.

Return of Documentation: The Certifying Board does not return documentation submitted to substantiate requests for CLE hours.

Retired Status of Certified Paralegals

Retired status may be requested by any Certified Paralegal* who:

- has been certified for more than five years;
- is 55 years of age or older; and
- retires from employment.

The Certified Paralegal must provide an affidavit verifying age and employment status. Upon receipt of the completed affidavit, verifying all requirements, the Certified Paralegal will be permitted Retired status and will be relieved from meeting further requirements for continuing legal education.

Any Certified Paralegal who becomes permanently disabled and is no longer working as a paralegal, legal assistant, or in a law-related field, may submit an affidavit with medical proof of disability and, upon receipt of the required documentation, be permitted Retired status.

Certified Paralegals in Retired status must show their credential as CP Retired. The NALA web site includes a searchable directory of all Certified Paralegals available to employers and the general public in order to verify the current certified status of an individual. Certified Paralegals incorrectly using the Retired designation may be subject to disciplinary proceedings, including loss of the credential.

Any Certified Paralegal who returns to employment will no longer retain Retired status and will be required to meet the same requirements as all other Certified Paralegals. A reactivation fee of \$125 will be required to reactivate the credential, with the five-year recertification period beginning on the date of reemployment. Should the Certified Paralegal have any hours of continuing legal education accrued to his/her benefit when Retired status is granted, those hours may be carried over, provided the continuing legal education hours were completed within two and one-half years prior to reactivation of the Certified Paralegal credential.

*Individuals using the Certified Legal Assistant (CLA) designation are eligible for Retired status under the same requirements as listed above.

Revocation of Certified Paralegal Credential for Failure to Meet CLE Requirements

When Certified Paralegals fail to comply with CLE requirements, a notice of expiration of the Certified Paralegal designation shall be provided by mail and will include an automatic probationary period of one year for the paralegal to submit the required number of CLE hours.

Hours for CLE programs taken during a probationary period will be applied first to the previous period until the hours and course requirements are met. After satisfaction of past due CLE, hours will be applied to the subsequent five-year period.

Upon expiration of the one-year probation period, without submission of the required CLE hours, a notice of revocation will be mailed to the individual advising that certification has been revoked and further use of the CP designation is prohibited.

Appeal of Revocation of Certified Paralegal Credential for Failure to Meet CLE Requirements

A Certified Paralegal may appeal in writing to the Certifying Board for review of the Board's actions concerning the continuing legal education requests. Grounds for appeal include the following:

CLE documents were lost in transit (via mail or electronically); the CLE programs were attended but evidence of attendance was destroyed, lost or misplaced; CLE hours were rejected but are believed to be within the published guidelines.

An appeal must include all relevant documentation and must be received at NALA Headquarters 30 days prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Certifying Board. The appeal shall be reviewed by an Appeals Committee of the NALA Certifying Board, which shall be composed of the Chair plus two members of the Board. Each member of the Appeals Committee shall have previously completed a minimum of one year on the Certifying Board.

The Certified Paralegal shall be given notice of the time and place of the meeting of the Appeals Committee. The Certified Paralegal shall have the opportunity to appear in person or be represented by counsel and to present any defense or explanation to the Appeals Committee.

The Certified Paralegal will bear his or her own costs of attendance or representation. No adverse inference shall be drawn from the failure or inability of the Certified Paralegal to attend the meeting of the Appeals Committee.

After consideration of the matter under appeal, the Appeals Committee shall submit its recommendation for action to the Certifying Board. The recommendation of the Appeals Committee may include suggestions for the Board's consideration such as those below. A

majority vote of the Certifying Board members present shall be final in the matter under appellate review.

Hardship or Extreme Circumstances as Basis of Appeal

An appeal of the revocation of the Certified Paralegal credential based on hardship or extreme circumstances will be considered under the following conditions:

- The five-year certification period, plus the one-year extension has expired; and
- The Certified Paralegal is on active military or active military reserve duty; or
- The Certified Paralegal has extenuating personal challenges, which could include long term unemployment or severe medical issues hampering one's ability to work or engage in activities outside of work for a period of one year or more.

An appeal must be filed within 12 months after expiration of the one-year extension already provided to the Certified Paralegal. An appeal filed after the 12-month period will not be considered.

If such appeal is submitted, the Certifying Board Chair will investigate to verify (a) the existence of a hardship or extreme circumstance, and (b) documentation to substantiate the position.

If the Chair finds the claim meets the conditions above, a committee of the Chair plus two Certifying Board members will review the file. If the committee members are unanimous in their decision, the paralegal will be advised of the decision. If the committee members are unable to come to a unanimous agreement, the appeal will be forwarded to the whole Certifying Board for review and decision.

A response to the appeal will be provided to the paralegal no later than 10 business days after receipt of the Board's decision by NALA Headquarters.

During the appeal, the Certified Paralegal credential will be designated inactive and may not be used or claimed by a paralegal. During the period the Certified Paralegal credential is considered inactive, the paralegal may list the credential on a resume or job application as long as the inactive status is clear. The names of inactive Certified Paralegals will not appear in the Certified Paralegal directory on the NALA web site.

The following options will be available to the paralegal, based upon the hardship:

Option 1

The Certifying Board, or a committee thereof, may allow the paralegal to retake the Certified Paralegal examination as a new candidate for certification.

The Board or committee may waive the examination application fee if they deem it appropriate. However, the application fee waiver will be valid for a limited period of time to be determined by the committee or Board, and the paralegal must retake the Certified Paralegal

examination within that time. The recertification fee may be waived only one time for a Certified Paralegal.

Option 2

The Certifying Board, or a committee thereof, may grant the paralegal up to an additional one year from the date of the decision to complete the CLE requirements needed.

With this option, the paralegal must comply with all recertification requirements as any other Certified Paralegal. The one-year probation period plus the extension of up to one year will apply against the ensuing five-year renewal period. The expiration date of the Certified Paralegal credential will not be adjusted forward to accommodate the extended time.

The Certified Paralegal must submit requests for CLE hours in writing and not via an on-line form.

The recertification fee may be waived only one time for a Certified Paralegal.

If the requirements are not met within the extended time period, the certification will be revoked consistent with Certifying Board policies.

APPENDIX



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 www.nala.org ♦ cle@nala.org

Certificate of Attendance

Certified Paralegals are required to submit evidence of 50 hours of continuing legal education hours to renew the CP credential every 5 years. Of the 50 hours, 5 hours must be in legal ethics, and no more than 10 hours may be recorded in non-substantive areas. If attending a non-NALA sponsored educational event, this certificate should be completed and submitted with relevant documentation for the event. Please be sure to obtain the required signatures for verification of attendance. The requirements to maintain the CP credential are available from NALA's web site at <https://www.nala.org/certification/certtest2view>.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE SPACES BELOW AND ATTACH A PROGRAM

Session Hours	Session Topics (Description and Speakers)	Validation of Attendance
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

 Name of CP (Please Print)

 NALA Account Number (On Mailing Label)

 Signature of CP

 Name of Seminar/Program Sponsor

 Address

 Authorized Signature of Sponsor Representative

 Date of Educational Event:

 Preferred e-mail address

 Location:

For Office Use Only	
Substantive hours	
Non-substantive hours	
Ethics	



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Certified Paralegal Recertification Affidavit

NOTE: This form should not be completed or submitted earlier than thirty days prior to the expiration date of your certification and should only be submitted once the 50 hours of CLE credit, including five hours of legal ethics, have been submitted to NALA Headquarters.

I, _____, hereby swear or affirm that I have, since my last certification, earned a minimum of fifty hours of CLE hours necessary to maintain my NALA CLA or CP status; the hours reported to NALA are true and accurate; that I have not violated the NALA Code of Ethics, nor been convicted of a felony or the unauthorized practice of law; that I have not divulged the contents of any Examination Questions or violated any of the Terms and Conditions of Testing; that I understand that my failure to meet the continuing education requirements as required by the NALA Certifying Board or falsification of information provided to the NALA Certifying Board may result in my NALA CLA or CP designation being revoked.

Date		Account # (if known)	
Signature			
Print Name			
Address			
City, State, ZIP			
Date Certified (mm/yy)			
E-mail			
Note: We rely on e-mail to communicate with you. If this is not acceptable, please check here <input type="checkbox"/>			
Please complete the payment information below. \$125 recertification fee paid by:			
Company Check/Certified Check/Money Order#			
<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	<input type="checkbox"/> VISA	<input type="checkbox"/> Discover	<input type="checkbox"/> AmEx
Name on card:		Acct. #:	Exp. Date:
Billing Address:			



THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION



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CERTIFIED PARALEGAL ROSTER UPDATE FORM

We are in the process of updating our records on all Certified Paralegals of record. We would appreciate your assistance in this effort, by taking a few minutes to provide us with the information requested below. When completed, please return this form to NALA Headquarters in the preaddressed envelope which is enclosed for your convenience. Thank you for your help.

Name: _____ Account #: _____

NOTE: If certified under a different name, please indicate name at time of certification:

Date Certified: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Please check preferred mailing address: / / Home / / Office

Employer: _____

Office Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Office Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail address: _____

NOTE: NALA is focusing its efforts on e-mail communications. If you do not wish to receive e-mails from NALA please check the following:

[] I do not wish to receive e-mails from NALA

Size of Firm: # of Lawyers: _____ # of Paralegals: _____

Your area of specialty: _____

/ / NALA Member / / Nonmember

Comments:



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Request for Certified Paralegal Retired Status

I, _____
(Name)

hereby swear or affirm that:

- I have been certified for more than five years;
- I am at least 55 years of age or older;
- I have retired from employment as of

(Date)

I understand that if the Retired status is permitted, my credential must be shown as CP Retired any time it is used.

I also understand that, should I return to work I will no longer retain Retired status and will be required to meet the same requirements as all other Certified Paralegals. A reactivation fee of \$125 will be required to reactivate the credential, with the five-year recertification period beginning on the date of my reemployment. Any hours of continuing legal education accrued to my benefit when Retired status was permitted, may be carried over, provided the continuing legal education hours were completed within two and one-half years prior to reactivation of the Certified Paralegal credential.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Signature Name (please print)

Address City State ZIP

E-mail: _____

Note: We will communicate by e-mail regarding this form. If this is not acceptable check here:



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Request for Certified Paralegal Retired Status – Permanent Disability

I, _____

hereby swear or affirm that:

- I am permanently disabled and no longer working as of

(Date)

- Medical proof of permanent disability is included with this affidavit.

I understand that if the Retired status is permitted, my credential must be shown as CP Retired any time it is used.

I also understand that, should I return to work, I will no longer retain Retired status and will be required to meet the same requirements as all other Certified Paralegals. A reactivation fee of \$125 will be required to reactivate the credential, with the five-year recertification period beginning on the date of my reemployment. Any hours of continuing legal education accrued to my benefit when Retired status was permitted, may be carried over, provided the continuing legal education hours were completed within two and one-half years prior to reactivation of the Certified Paralegal credential.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Signature

Name (please print)

Address

City State ZIP

E-mail: _____

Note: We will communicate by e-mail regarding this form. If this is not acceptable check here:



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Certified Paralegal Reactivation Affidavit

I, _____ (Name)

hereby swear or affirm that:

- I have been in Retired status since _____; (Date)
I have returned to work as of _____ (Date)

and am no longer eligible for Retired status.

I also understand that since I have returned to work, I am required to meet the same requirements as all other Certified Paralegals. A reactivation fee of \$125 is required to reactivate my credential, with my five-year recertification period beginning on the date of my reemployment. Any hours of continuing legal education accrued to my benefit when Retired status was permitted, may be carried over, provided the continuing legal education hours were completed within two and one-half years prior to reactivation of the Certified Paralegal credential.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Signature Name (please print)

Address City State ZIP

NALA Account Number (if known)

E-mail: _____

Note: We will communicate by e-mail regarding this form. If this is not acceptable check here: []

\$125 reactivation fee payment information. Please complete the payment information below:

Check # _____ | | Master Card | | VISA | | Discover | | AmEx

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name as it appears on card _____