

PARALEGALS TODAY

Utilizing Civil Litigation Paralegals in the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office

by Lisa Taylor

The duties of a paralegal employed as a litigation paralegal in the civil division of the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office are many and varied. By statute, the prosecuting attorney, currently Michael K. Allen, represents the county and its various offices in all matters, criminal and non-criminal. The civil division represents the Board of County Commissioners and the various departments under its jurisdiction, all elected county officials, county employees (where applicable), the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Board, the Hamilton County Board of Health, and a variety of other county agencies and institutions. The division defends lawsuits filed against the county and county employees in state and federal courts, and prosecutes lawsuits where necessary to protect the county's interests.

Paralegals assist the litigation attorneys in defense of civil rights, employment and personal injury cases. Specifically, they conduct confidential legal research utilizing LexisNexis and the law libraries. They research, compile and analyze law sources to prepare legal documents (e.g., briefs, pleadings, appeals, contracts and affidavits) for review and use by litigation attorneys. They organize and maintain case files. Paralegals also assist with trial preparation for both state and federal court cases, including scheduling and attending depositions, summarizing deposition transcripts, assembling and

preparing exhibits and pleading clips, and operating PowerPoint and technical equipment for trials. Additionally, paralegals locate witnesses and technical experts



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to assist in case evaluation and obtain medical authorizations. Certification as an RCIC (Regional Crime Information Center) operator is required for this position. RCIC is a computerized database that law enforcement uses to obtain information such as criminal background checks, outstanding warrants, and aliases.

Finally, paralegals maintain the office's online case management system, file pleadings with the court clerks and often prepare affidavits and obtain clients' signatures for the court. The Hamilton County Clerk's website (www.courtclerk.org) is utilized on a daily basis as an invaluable source of information.

Paralegals employed in this governmental capacity have the unique opportunity to assist the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office with ongoing litigation, allowing the office to be more efficient in its duty to the county and its citizens. ■

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