

LEGAL STUDIES/PARALEGAL

Employment for paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow much faster than average for all occupations through 2014. Despite projections of rapid employment growth, competition for jobs should continue as many people seek to go into this profession; however, experienced, formally trained paralegals should have the best employment opportunities. Private law firms will continue to be the largest employers of paralegals, but a growing array of other organizations, such as corporate legal departments, insurance companies, real estate and title insurance firms, and banks hire paralegals. Job opportunities for paralegals will expand in the public sector as well. Community legal-service programs, which provide assistance to the poor, elderly, minorities, and middle-income families, will employ additional paralegals to minimize expenses and serve the most people. Federal, State, and local government agencies, consumer organizations, and the courts also should continue to hire paralegals in increasing numbers. Paralegals must work under the supervision of an attorney in Kansas and Missouri.

Employment Information

Greater Kansas City Area: In 2000, paralegal and legal assistants held an estimated 1,450 jobs in the eleven counties that make up the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), with 1,740 jobs projected by 2010 (+20.0%). An average of 38 annual openings is anticipated. Further data indicate that an estimated 440 paralegal and legal assistants were employed throughout the four Kansas counties in the Kansas City MSA (Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte) in 2005.

State: Paralegal and legal assistants held an estimated 170 jobs in Kansas in 2000, with 1,450 jobs projected by 2010 (+23.9%). All together 80 openings are anticipated due to the need for replacements.

National: Paralegal and legal assistants held 224,000 jobs in 2004, with 291,000 jobs projected by 2014 (+29.7%). Approximately 85,000 openings are expected due to growth and the need for replacement workers.

Salary Information

Greater Kansas City Area: Paralegal and legal assistants employed in the Greater Kansas City area earned an average hourly wage of \$18.28 in 2004. The average hourly wage for paralegal and legal assistants in Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte Counties was \$17.65 in 2005. Half earned less than \$16.62, and half earned more.

State: Paralegal and legal assistants in Kansas earned an average hourly wage of \$16.87 in 2005. Half earned less than \$16.03 per hour, and half earned more.

National: Paralegal and legal assistants working full-time earned an average hourly wage of \$19.45 in 2004.

JCCC Placement and Salary Information

The JCCC Office of Institutional Research conducts a follow-up study of program completers one year after completion. Seventeen of the twenty-one paralegal program completers who responded to the short-term follow-up study conducted during the 2005-06 academic year were employed full-time in a job related to their paralegal program and reported earning an average hourly wage of \$15.63.

Note: Salary and placement information for JCCC career program completers is based on data supplied by respondents to follow-up studies and is not necessarily representative of all career program completers.