

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION**Standing Committee on
Paralegals**

321 North Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60654-7598
Telephone: (312) 988-5757

www.americanbar.org
www.abaparalegals.org

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Noemi Aguirre
Noemi.Aguirre@americanbar.org

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National Federation of Paralegal Associations
9100 Purdue Road, Ste. 200
Indianapolis, IN 46268

RE: Identification of non-attorney legal professionals performing substantive legal work under supervision of licensed attorneys as "Paralegals"

Dear members of the NFPA Board of Directors,

I would like to thank the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc. for its July 25, 2018, letter, addressed to the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Paralegals. At our October 10, 2018, fall meeting, your suggestion to reconsider the inclusion of the term "legal assistant" in our definition of paralegal was discussed at length.

As you may know, at the August 1997 ABA Annual Meeting, the ABA's policy making body, the House of Delegates, adopted the current definition of "legal assistant/paralegal", as recommended by the Standing Committee on Legal Assistants our predecessor body.


The current definition of "legal assistant/paralegal" replaces the definition adopted by the ABA Board of Governors in 1986. It added the term "paralegal," with the rationale that at the time, the terms "legal assistant" and "paralegal" were, in practice, used interchangeably.

As this definition is House of Delegates-approved policy, any changes to the definition must also go through the ABA's House. The House consists of more than 580 members from across the practice and geographic spectrum, and policy before the body must be well vetted and strongly justified to be adopted.

As such, to gain a better understanding of the usage of these phrases and also how both paralegals and legal assistants are presently being utilized in the delivery of legal services, the Standing Committee will be surveying our stakeholders, both paralegal associations and our ABA approved programs, to determine the usage of both phrases, and making a determination on whether to move forward with a definition change in 2019. We will be sure to keep you abreast of any changes or discussions on this topic and would value your continued input.

Thank you for your continued interest in the work of the Association and the Standing Committee, and we look forward to working together.

Respectfully,



Christopher Jennison, Chair
Standing Committee on Paralegals
American Bar Association