

May 2014

Melissa Klimpel,  
ACP, Editor

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# SUMMONS

*Official Publication of*

*WESTERN DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS*

*An Association for Paralegals/Legal Assistants*

[www.wdala.org](http://www.wdala.org)

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

***By Shari L. Erdman, ACP***



***Shari L. Erdman, ACP***

This is an invigorating time of year! Spring is here which means our Spring Seminar in Minot is coming up and a number of us are also preparing to attend the NALA convention in Charleston, SC, in July. But, most importantly, what energizes me most and reminds me of how lucky I am to be a part of this group is all of you!

Without the support and knowledge I have gained from WDALA, I would not have taken the CP test, or gone on to get my ACP, or been a member of NALA. I am a goal-oriented person and for what WDALA has given me, I will always be eternally grateful. I gained exposure to and the skills necessary to preside over an association, work with committees, amend bylaws and standing rules, and make sure everyone has a voice. How can I ever forget the utter terror of running my first annual meeting!

The reason I bring this up is that I have taken a part-time position as the Executive Director of the North Dakota Defense Lawyers Association.

I started this position on March 1, 2014. I still have my "day job" with Crowley Fleck in the litigation department. Without my experiences in WDALA, however, I would not have the necessary tools to effectively assume this position with ND DLA. I really hope your life's experiences open new doors for you, too.

Speaking of the Spring Seminar in Minot, I hope you will agree it is another great, diverse lineup of speakers. I am especially excited that District Judge David W. Nelson will be speaking. He has always been a great supporter of WDALA. Our group is certainly blessed with tremendous support.

Law Day is coming up as well and I am anxious to hear from those that take part in any of those activities. I will be joining attorney Lisa Dynneson in her presentation at the

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE continued**

high school. Additionally, after getting approval from the WDALA board members, I will be running a small ad for WDALA in the Williston Herald that will appear alongside ads from various law firms in our area all promoting Law Day. We think the exposure in this area will be

beneficial.

The Williston members of WDALA have been trying to get together for lunch and make it a monthly event. We succeeded in getting together in March and it was a lot of fun. We look forward to many more.

Finally, don’t forget that this year is WDALA’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Shout it from the rooftops! The anniversary committee is hard at work planning for this special occasion and it should be a lot of fun.

Happy spring, everyone!

“At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice he is the worst .”

-Aristotle



**Mary Sue Knutson,  
CLA**

**REGION II REPORT**

**By Mary Sue Knutson, CLA**

It has been rather quiet for Region II since the holidays as far as getting together. We have had a few luncheons and have done some networking but, other than that, everyone has been busy with work, vacations, or staying inside during our 20 below winter days. We are all looking forward to spring and being able to get outside.

WESTERN DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS 2013-2014

OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

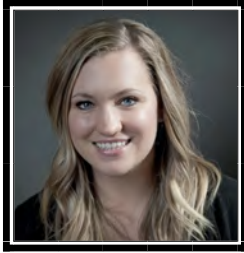
President..... Shari Erdman, ACP  
 First Vice President..... Leigh Johnson  
 Second Vice President .....Afton Basden, CP  
 Secretary ..... Nilla Fry  
 Treasurer .....Corrina Pfaff  
 Parliamentarian.....Laurie Guenther, ACP  
 NALA Liaison ..... Jen Defoe, ACP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Region I..... Tera Skaar, CLA and Cherlyn Biber, CLA  
 Region II.....Mary Sue Knutson, CLA  
 Region III.....Charlene Smith, CP  
 Region IV.....

COMMITTEES

Education .....Leigh Johnson (Chair); Corrina Pfaff; Melissa Hamilton, ACP;  
 Traci Hilsabeck, ACP; and Candace Schafer, CLA  
 Membership .....Afton Basden, CP  
 Finance/Budget .....Corrina Pfaff  
 CLA Chairman ..... Jen Defoe, ACP  
 Nominations/Elections ..... Melissa Hamilton, ACP  
 Auditing ..... Donna Seright; Lorelee Clay; and Afton Basden, CP  
 Legal Assistant Day .....Jen Defoe, ACP and Melissa Hamilton, ACP  
 Ethics/Professional Development..... Vicki Kunz, ACP  
 Summons ..... Melissa Klimpel, ACP  
 Library ..... Melissa Hamilton, ACP  
 State Bar/NDTLA Liaison ..... Bonnie Harris  
 Historian .....Laurie Guenther, ACP  
 Student Liaison ..... Vicki Kunz, ACP  
 Website.....Charlene Smith, CP; Jen Defoe, ACP;  
 Melissa Hamilton, ACP; and Terri Atkins  
 30th Anniversary Committee..... Shari Erdman, ACP; Leigh Johnson;  
 Laurie Guenther, ACP; Melissa Klimpel, ACP;  
 Melissa Hamilton, ACP; and Vicki Kunz, ACP



**Leigh Johnson**

*“I have been in the process of securing speakers for the Fall Seminar which will be held in September in Bismarck, date yet to be determined.”*

## FIRST VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

**By Leigh Johnson**

**Spring Seminar:** WDALA’s Spring Seminar was held on April 25, 2014, at the Sleep Inn and Suites in Minot, ND. The morning session began with Breezy A. Schmidt, attorney at Legal Services of North Dakota, presenting, “Fair Housing Law & Disabled Americans”. Next, Sandra L. Voller, Assistant Attorney General, spoke about North Dakota’s Open Record and Meeting Law.

The afternoon started with Judge David W. Nelson presenting “Observations from a Judge’s Perspective”. The seminar ended with Diane K. Lutt, attorney at Howard & Associates, P.C., with her presentation, “An LL-What!?!: A Guide to Limited Liability Entities in North Dakota”.

There were projected to be 20 attendees at the seminar and it was estimated that WDALA will make a profit of \$922.75. We received generous donations from our sponsors, who are listed below. Please be sure to thank them if you see them, and remember them for your future needs.

**Luncheon Teleseminar:** On January 16, 2014, WDALA hosted a luncheon teleseminar. Our speaker was attorney Laura Erickson and her presentation was “Introduction to Oil & Gas Operations.” Ms. Erickson educated our group on understanding oil and gas regulations for clients; legislation and statutes regarding pipelines, flaring, distance from occupied dwelling; and process for obtaining permits from North Dakota Industrial Commission

and subsequent process used for wells. There were a total of 15 attendees – 13 members and 2 non-members.

**Fall Seminar:** I have been in the process of securing speakers for the Fall Seminar which will be held in September in Bismarck, date yet to be determined. Speakers scheduled thus far include attorney Jack G. Marcil who will be presenting, “Preparing Your Case for Mediation” and attorney Toni M. Sandin who will be speaking on the subject of ethics.

**Future Luncheon Webinar:** Another webinar is also in the works. I have reached out to Judge Daniel J. Crothers in the hopes he will speak to WDALA regarding technology in the legal practice.

Please feel free to contact me with ideas, topics, or concerns. Thank you.

### CORPORATE BREAK SPONSORS:

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Minot, ND 58702-1180  
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Minot, ND 58701  
(701) 838-1907



**Afton Basden, CP**

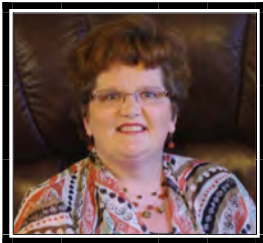
## **SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**By Afton Basden, CP**

Happy Spring! It is such a relief to see the snow go away and enjoy being outdoors again.

We have one new member: Debi D. Osterby, who works in the Minot Regional Child Support Unit. This brings our membership to 47 members (46 Active, 1 Associate), and an updated roster is attached. Please note new e-mail addresses for Lorelee Clay, Mitzi Sundheim, and me.

If there are any questions, please feel free to drop an e-mail message to me at [abasden@howardlawfirmnd.com](mailto:abasden@howardlawfirmnd.com).



**Corrina Pfaff**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

**By Corrina Pfaff**

Happy Spring Everyone!

The checkbook balance as of April 10, 2014 is \$9,807.39.

## ***Congratulations to Shari L. Erdman, ACP***



**Shari L. Erdman, ACP**

Shari L. Erdman, ACP, has successfully completed NALA's Advanced Paralegal Certification course on Trial Practice.



**Jen Defoe, ACP**

*“NALA has announced the availability of practice tests for the Certified Paralegal examination that are delivered on the same testing environment as the CP exam.”*

## **NALA LIAISON’S REPORT**

**By Jen Defoe, ACP**

As promised in my February Liaison article ... spring has sprung! It is mid-April as I write this, with the wind blowing about 45 mph ... but I am very optimistic that by the time WDALA members are *reading* this – spring really will have sprung! By this, I mean green grass, tulips popping up, and that warm sunshine I am so desperately craving.

With spring seems to come the feeling of so many things happening at once, or needing to get done at once, and NALA is keeping busy this time of year as well!

First and foremost are the preparations for the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual NALA Convention to be held in Charleston, South Carolina, July 22-25, 2014. WDALA is sponsoring attendance through WDALA President Shari Erdman, ACP; WDALA NALA Liaison Jen Defoe, ACP; and Region III Director, Charlene Smith, CP. Melissa Klimpel, ACP and Melissa Hamilton, ACP, will also be in attendance through sponsorship of NALA. The educational institutes being offered at this year’s convention consist of: Anatomy of a Case, Corporate Law, Discovery, Elder Law, Intellectual Property Law, and Essential Skills.

At the Convention, NALA members will be electing four national officers (first vice president, second vice president, secretary and treasurer), as well as five directors (Regions 1, 5, 6, 7 and 9). For NALA members who are not attending the NALA Convention, but

who wish to make their voices heard through the voting process, designation of proxy forms are available through NALA’s website under Members Area/2014 Annual Meeting News. The designation of proxy forms must be filed by June 25, 2014.

IF you are interested in yet signing up to attend this sure-to-be exciting and extremely educational convention, there is still time! A webcast with all the information you will need to make your decision will be held on June 11 at 12:00 p.m. (Central). This webcast is open to any member who is or may be interested in attending the convention. Please let me know if you are interested in sitting in on the webcast.

NALA has announced the availability of practice tests for the Certified Paralegal examination that are delivered on the same testing environment as the CP exam. The practice tests are offered separate and apart from the CP exam and Certifying Board for Paralegals. The Certifying Board has not reviewed any questions nor provided any input in the authoring of the practice tests. Please visit NALA’s website at: <http://www.nala.org/cp-practice.aspx> for additional information, or you can access the practice tests at: <https://app.testrac.com/nalap/delivery>.

The APC Board has announced a new course for family law paralegals – Family Law – Dissolution Case Management. This course concentrates on

**NALA LIAISON’S REPORT continued**

practice and procedure in the area of marriage dissolution case management. Additional information about this course can be found on NALA’s website.

Information for the CLA/CP testing and registration dates is listed below.

Filing deadlines are strictly enforced.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions concerning NALA, the upcoming convention, or the products and services offered. Happy Spring!!!

Examination Date	Application Filing Deadline**	Late Application Filing Deadline (With \$25 late filing fee)
2014/2015	2014	
May 1-31	April 1, 2014	April 10, 2014
September 1-30	August 1, 2014	August 10, 2014
January 1-31	December 1, 2014	December 10, 2014

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- May 1-31, 2014                      CLA/CP Exam Testing Window
- July 23-25, 2014                    NALA Convention, Charleston, SC
- July 25, 2014                        Deadline to submit *Summons* articles
- August 1, 2014                      Application Filing Deadline for September CLA/CP Exam Window
- September 1-30, 2014              CLA/CP Exam Testing Window
- September 2014                      Fall Seminar and Annual Meeting, Bismarck
- December 1, 2014                    Application Filing Deadline for January CLA/CP Exam Window
- January 1-31, 2015                    CLA/CP Exam Testing Window





**SPRING SEMINAR PHOTOS**



Judge David Nelson



Attorney Sandra Voller



Attorney Breezy Schmidt



Attorney Diane Lutt



*Happy Birthday to the following WDALA members:*

Leigh Johnson	May 2
Char Jacober, ACP	May 4
Cherlyn Biwer, CLA	May 12
Jim Hagen, CP	May 22
Melissa Hamilton, ACP	May 22
Angela Pittman	May 31
Carmen Dukeman	June 14
JoDee Wiedmeier, CP	June 16
Carol Solberg, CLA	June 18
Nilla Fry	June 25
Becky Kocourek, CLA	July 2
Vicki Kunz, ACP	July 20
Rosanna Smith	July 24
Cheryl Tryhus, CP	July 26
Amy Weninger	July 30



**James Fleming, Esq.**

## **GETTING TO KNOW THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM**

**By James Fleming, Director, Child Support Division of the North Dakota Department of Human Services**

“Someone from Child Support is calling about a recent order in one of our cases.”

For those of you who work in family law on a regular basis or even once in a while, the odds are good that your receptionist has brought you this message before. And you may not have been sure what you did or didn't do that led to the call.

Law firms and the Child Support Division (Child Support) are kind of like dance partners – the more they can anticipate each other's actions, the better the outcome. This article will provide some information about the child support program in North Dakota that will help you anticipate Child Support's interests in each case.

Has it struck you as somewhat random when Child Support is involved in a case and when it is not? It is very easy for a case to open to Child Support, and much harder for a case to close after it is opened. Most of you know that if a child is receiving some form of public assistance (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or Medicaid) or is in foster care, Child Support will almost always be involved. But that only accounts for about 25% of our caseload. Either parent can apply for child support services, and that accounts for another 17.5% of our total caseload. The remaining 57.5% are cases in which the person who used to receive public assistance for the child. After public assistance has stopped, most cases will automatically remain

open to Child Support unless the parent specifically request closure of the case.

These numbers are important because it means that if you want to know whether a client has an open child support case, you can't simply ask whether the client has a child who is currently on TANF or Medicaid. You need to ask more questions about whether either parent has applied for child support services or if the child has been on public assistance or in foster care in the past.

North Dakota Rule of Civil Procedure 10 requires that Child Support be added to the title of a civil action if a case is open in one of the regional child support units (because the state is a real party in interest – see North Dakota Century Code section 14-09-09.26). This is not just a requirement that applies to Child Support when it learns of such actions – it is an obligation of all parties and their attorneys when filing pleadings in a family law action. In case of any doubt whether a case is open to Child Support, please don't add Child Support to the title of the action “just in case.” Contact a regional child support unit. The contact information for our offices can be found on our website at [www.childsupportnd.com](http://www.childsupportnd.com). Confidentiality laws usually don't allow Child Support to tell you why a case is open, but Child Support can confirm whether it has an open case and needs to be added to the action as a third

party.

If you don't add Child Support to the action, and it turns out the Child Support should have been notified of the action, you will almost always receive a motion from Child Support to vacate the child support order. In egregious cases, you may also receive a request for sanctions against your law firm for the failure. In our experience, courts are not fond of needing to do the same work twice simply because one of the parties or their attorneys failed to follow Rule 10.

In cases where Child Support is involved, what outcome are we looking for? State child support programs work with five standard federal performance measures. These measures are:

- Percentage of open cases with a child born out of wedlock in which paternity has been established
- Percentage of open cases in which a child support order has been established
- Percentage of current support due in open cases that is collected on time
- Percentage of open cases with arrears in which there has been a collection toward arrears
- Amount of child support collected in open cases for each dollar spent on collection

Contrary to what you may hear in the local tavern or online in blogs and chat rooms, Child Support does not make money

on what it collects, nor is it our program's goal to establish and enforce court obligations that are as high as possible. Child Support is required to follow the same income-based child support guidelines as law firms. Plus, we are much like a private collection agency - we want to collect what's owed, and the less that is owed, the easier child support is to collect.

For example, under the current support measurement above, if the parent's true ability to pay based on his or her income or earning ability is \$300 per month under the guidelines, it is much better to have an order properly set for \$300 per month (100% collection) as opposed to an order accruing at an inflated \$600 per month (50% collection). This is also why Child Support periodically reviews upon request and seeks appropriate modifications to child support orders - the amount due should rise and fall with comparable fluctuations in the obligor's income due to a job change, raise, or other circumstances.

The vast majority of North Dakotans who owe child support do a good job supporting their children; over 90% of Child Support's cases have a support order and 75% of the current support due each month is paid on time. Both of these numbers are well above the national average.

If Child Support seems to be getting anxious for you to get a support order in place, that's be-

cause there are federal timeframes within which child support orders are supposed to be established (75% within 6 months and 90% within one year).

Even if there is no open Child Support case, a law firm is still not free to include whatever it wishes in a proposed child support order. The guidelines still must be applied and the amount due is still collected through income withholding unless the narrow exceptions in state law apply (see NDCC 14-09-09.24). In addition, state law (NDCC 50-09-02.1) requires Child Support to maintain the official records of the state regarding all child support obligations, payments, and amounts that are still due. There is no such thing as child support that is due privately between the parents and is "off the books" in terms of the state. Now that all court orders are being scanned on Odyssey, a court order that lacks all the required statutory provisions, including payment through the state disbursement unit, will be discovered and lead to follow-up by Child Support.

In addition to Rule 10 compliance issues, the other most common problem arising in proposed court orders prepared by law firms involves equal parenting time. Take a close look at the child support guidelines - a court order must identify the separate obligation of each parent, and not just the net

amount due after offset. If only the net amount due is expressed in the order, or if you decide the parents have sufficiently similar income that it would net to zero anyway and you don't do a guideline calculation at all, you can expect to hear from Child Support because we cannot fulfill our responsibility under NDCC 50-09-02.1 to record and monitor all child support obligations.

State law requires every child support order to include several specific provisions. To help parents and law firms and courts include all the required provisions, Child Support came up with the memory aid of IRISH INN:

- I = Income withholding
- R = Review every 3 years
- I = Interest accrues on arrears
- S = State Disbursement Unit must process all payments
- H = Health insurance or other provision for medical support
- In = Income of the obligor (or both obligors in a split or equal physical custody case)
- N = Notice must be provided to clerk or SDU of changes in address, telephone number, employment, etc.

If your proposed court order includes all these provisions, it will go a long way to avoiding any problems that Child Support may have with your proposed order

and increase your chance of Child Support signing-off on your stipulations. Even if a case is not otherwise open to Child Support, courts regularly grant Child Support's motion to intervene when the equal parenting time calculations are not correct or when other mandatory provisions have been mandated, because it impairs Child Support's ability to fulfill its legal responsibility to maintain the state's official child support records.

There are many more areas of interaction between law firms and Child Support than can be covered in this article, so I conclude by recommending that you take the next set of pleadings you receive from Child Support and read it closely as an example of language you may want to use in your own documents. Many law firms use template language that was written years and years ago, and the language is out of date or simply doesn't address things that often come up such as emancipation of older siblings or credit balances created because a downward modification is retroactive to the date of the motion. Over the last several years, Child Support has spent a lot of time internally working on its template language to be as clear and easy to read as possible and to cover some of these changes. Please feel free to copy this language into your own templates. Not only will it help you include all the IRISH INN provisions, it may

help avoid getting one of those messages from your receptionist.

*James C. Fleming is the director of the Child Support Division of the North Dakota Department of Human Services, treasurer of the National Council of Child Support Directors, and member of the board of directors of the National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA). Jim is co-chair of NCSEA's Policy and Government Relations Committee and a member of the editorial committee for the NCSEA Child Support CommuniQue. He started working with Child Support in 1994 and is a frequent speaker on child support topics and state and national conferences.*

*Jim was the recipient of the 2009 Family Support Council Program Awareness Award and the 2004 Freedom Award from the North Dakota Newspaper Association. He also serves on the board of directors of the North Dakota Newspaper Association Education Foundation. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of North Dakota in 1989 and his Juris Doctorate from Notre Dame Law School in 1993. A second-generation attorney and native of Cavalier North Dakota, Jim and his wife Terri live in Bismarck and are blessed with four daughters. In his spare time, Jim likes to sing, cook, garden, and do woodworking.*



**Susan A. Earl, CP**

## **WORD PERFECT, HOW I MISS THEE . . . MAYBE**

**By Susan A. Earl, CP**

Every now and again I get a bit nostalgic and wonder why people stopped using Word Perfect®. Years ago, it was the cool new gadget to have and “all the law firms were doing it.” Now, however, it seems you have to be over a certain age to even remember Word Perfect, or life without reality TV.

Now, in the days of Word Perfect, I was a master of sorts using every shortcut key and the CTRL, SHIFT and ALT keys to their maximum capacity. I taught classes to the poor masses that didn’t have the pleasure of using Word Perfect as every good American should. So, as I let my nostalgia tempt me into the contemplation of the perils of Microsoft Word®, I decided there must be some good in there. There must be something as great as the Macro, or SHIFT F7 to print – oh how I miss my keyboard cheat-sheet that rested atop the function keys.

I decided that in order to remind myself that life without Word Perfect wasn’t so bad, I needed to find some great shortcuts in Microsoft Word which would help the macro withdrawal subside and alas, I did; and so I share some of the pretty neat things about Word that once I didn’t know.

### **Tip #1**

I have wasted more time trying to conform fonts that I had pasted into a document than anyone should – I wish I would have known this tip. After pasting the source text into the document, simply highlight the text and hit Control and the Space Bar. Simple as that. Of course, you can also use the Format Painter button as well by highlighting the formatted text that you want to keep and then clicking over the text you want to change.

### **Tip #2**

A decent replacement to the different function commands of Word Perfect is the Quick Access Toolbar. By simply clicking the arrow at the right-hand side of the toolbar at the top of your screen, you can add whatever actions you use most frequently. It’s like having all your favorite items within arm’s reach. You can also select “More Commands” in the dropdown menu to select more items to add. If the toolbar is too far from your document space, you can drag and drop it below the ribbon for easier access.



**Tip #3**

I really like this next tip, if you care to do a little extra work. You can back up the Quick Access Toolbar you just created, so you can keep it when you move to an updated computer, or workstation. Simply find the file titled “Word.qat” in your “. . . Application Data\Microsoft\Office” folder and copy it to a jump drive. Start looking for this file string in your Documents and Settings folder.

**Tip #4**

In my opinion, I saved the best for last. This one finally made me believe after all these years that I’ll be okay using Word. My favorite element of Word Perfect was the ability to enter frequent text into a document with a quick macro. Words I struggled typing were a breeze with a simple CTRL and whichever letter I could remember. I’ve tried to use the macro feature in Word, but quite frankly, it’s just too long and involved a process and to recall the macro is too time consuming for the little tasks or text that I used it for. Until now: If you have a certain paragraph, text, or even directions to your office that you use fre-

quently, turn it into a Quick Part. Highlight the text that you use regularly, click the insert tab, and choose Quick Parts. Then select “Save Selection To The Quick Part Gallery”. The next time you want to use that text or paragraph, simply click the Quick Parts button and click on the saved text to insert.

If there are any other Word Perfect lovers out there like me, I hope this helps you see Word in a different light. And for those of you who already love Word, maybe one of these is a new trick you can use.

*Susan A. Earl, CP is a Vendor Contract Manager for the IT Governance Team at Kimberly-Clark Corporation in Neenah, Wisconsin where she specializes in global hardware and software contracts. Previously, she spent more than 15 years as a paralegal focusing on corporate, trademark, employment and contract law. Susan received the CP designation in 2003. In addition to degrees in Paralegal Studies and Court Reporting, Susan also holds a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies and Business and is a former Adjunct Instructor of Employment and Contract law.*

Reprinted with permission of NALA, The Association of Legal Assistants/Paralegals, and by Susan A. Earl, CP, the article originally appeared in the March/April 2014 Facts & Findings, NALA's bi-monthly magazine for paralegals. The article is reprinted here in its entirety. For further information, contact NALA at [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org) or phone (918) 587-6828.



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**NEWS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**  
**May 5, 2014**

**NALA**  
**Receives Accreditation of the Certified Paralegal program**  
**from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA)**

WASHINGTON (Date)—The NCCA has accredited the NALA Certified Paralegal certification program for a five-year period, expiring April 30, 2019.

Founded in 1975, NALA is a professional association providing continuing education and professional certification to paralegals. Currently, over 8,900 paralegals may use the Certified Paralegal (CP) designation. The CP credential has been awarded to over 17,822 paralegals in its span of almost 40 years. The Certified Paralegal (CP) program is the first certification program accredited by NCCA which serves the legal community.

NALA received NCCA accreditation of the Certified Paralegal program by submitting an application demonstrating the program's compliance with standards outlined in NCCA's Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs. NCCA is the accrediting body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). Since 1987, the NCCA has been accrediting certifying programs based on the highest quality standards in professional certification to ensure the programs adhere to modern standards of practice in the certification industry.

The NCCA standards require demonstration of a valid and reliable process for development, implementation, maintenance, and governance of certification programs. NCCA uses a rigorous peer review process to establish accreditation standards; evaluate compliance with the standards; recognize organizations/programs which demonstrate compliance; and serve as a resource on quality certification. The NCCA Standards are comprehensive and cover all aspects of the certification program, including administration, assessment development and recertification.

NCCA standards are consistent with The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999) and are applicable to all professions and industries. To maintain accreditation, organizations are required to submit annual reports to NCCA and must undergo a reaccreditation every five years.

(MORE)



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Accreditation provides third party oversight of an assessment system. It provides a mechanism for associations to demonstrate to the profession it represents, and the general public it serves, that its credentialing program has been reviewed by a panel of impartial experts that have determined that the program has met the stringent standards set by the credentialing community. Accreditation by NCCA provides organizations a way to answer the question, "who reviewed your certificate or certification program?", a question often posed by members of an occupation, employers, and sometimes, the courts.

There are more than 270 NCCA-accredited programs that certify individuals in a wide range of professions and occupations including nurses, financial professionals, respiratory therapists, counselors, and emergency technicians, and more. ICE's mission is to advance credentialing through education, standards, research, and advocacy to ensure competence across professions and occupations. NCCA was founded as a commission whose mission is to help ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public through the accreditation of a variety of certification programs that assess professional competence.

ICE and NCCA are located at 2025 M Street, N.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036-3309; telephone 202/367-1165; facsimile 202/367-2165; website [www.credentialingexcellence.org](http://www.credentialingexcellence.org).

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