

AAPI CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The American Alliance of Paralegals, Inc., (“AAPI”) has established a voluntary program for the certification of paralegals. Each approved applicant will be granted permission to use the designation American Alliance Certified Paralegal (“AACP”).

Every AACP will be bound by the American Alliance’s Code of Ethics. Any AACP who violates any provision of the Code of Ethics, or who is convicted of a felony, crime of moral turpitude or engages in the unauthorized practice of law will have his/her American Alliance certification revoked.

The AACP Program consists of and incorporates the following standards and procedures:

EDUCATIONAL AND EXPERIENCE CRITERIA

Every paralegal seeking American Alliance certification must possess no less than five (5) years of substantive paralegal experience and meet one (1) of the following three (3) educational criteria:

- (a) A Bachelor or advanced Degree in any discipline from an accredited institution; or
- (b) An Associate Degree in paralegal studies from an ABA approved paralegal program or a program which is a voting institutional member of the American Association for Paralegal Education; or

(c) A Certificate from an ABA approved paralegal program or a program which is a voting institutional member of the American Association for Paralegal Education.

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION

Upon meeting the above criteria, every candidate making application for certification shall submit all of the following items to the American Alliance of Paralegals, Inc. Certification Commission (“the Commission”):

- (a) A completed verified application;
- (b) A certified copy of the paralegal’s official transcript(s) from the educational institution(s) attended;
- (c) An affidavit or declaration from the attorney attesting to the paralegal’s substantive work experience; and
- (d) A processing fee.

CERTIFICATION/CREDENTIAL

Following submission of the verified application, payment of the processing fee, and review and approval by the Commission, a certificate will be issued to the paralegal indicating certification by the American Alliance based on the above formal educational and experience criteria. Upon such certification each paralegal will be permitted to use the designation American Alliance Certified Paralegal (“AACP”).

AAPI CERTIFICATION COMMISSION

The Commission will consist of three (3) members appointed for staggered three-year terms by the American Alliance Board of Directors. Two of the three members of the Commission will be American Alliance paralegal members and one will be a paralegal educator. The Commission members shall not receive compensation for their services.

The Commission shall examine the qualifications of each paralegal making application for certification and will determine whether he/she meets the requirements as set forth above. If any paralegal is denied certification by the Commission, he/she may file an appeal to the American Alliance Board of Directors within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the denial. The American Alliance Board of Directors shall make the final determination of the acceptance or denial of the American Alliance certification.

CLE REQUIREMENTS

In order to maintain American Alliance certification, every AACP shall renew his/her certification status every three (3) years and complete eighteen (18) hours of continuing legal education (“CLE”), with three (3) of the eighteen (18) hours being in ethics. Proof of completion of the requisite CLE along with the three-year renewal fee in effect at the time of renewal shall be submitted to the Director of Education. At the time of renewal, an AACP must be employed as a paralegal.

THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF PARALEGALS, INC.

CODE OF ETHICS

1. A paralegal shall not engage in the unauthorized practice of law.
2. A paralegal shall keep confidential any and all information, documents and other materials entrusted to him or her or acquired in some other way during the course of the legal representation of a client. The confidentiality shall be maintained before, during and after the legal representation unless the client has given consent or disclosure is required by law or by court order.
3. A paralegal shall avoid conflicts of interest and shall immediately disclose any potential conflicts of interest to his or her employer.
4. A paralegal shall ensure that his or her status as a paralegal is disclosed at the beginning of any professional relationship with the attorney, client, personnel of a court, or the personnel of an administrative agency.
5. A paralegal shall follow all provisions of the rules of professional conduct for a paralegal of the state in which he or she is employed. If no such specific code for paralegals exists, then a paralegal shall follow the attorney's code of ethics as it applies to paralegals within that state.
6. A paralegal shall maintain personal and professional integrity.
7. A paralegal shall attain a high degree of competency through education, training and experience.
8. A paralegal shall maintain a high degree of competency by engaging in continuing paralegal education on an annual basis.

www.aapipara.org



Paralegal Certification Program of The American Alliance of Paralegals, Inc.

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