



## Information for International Law Client Wanting to Practice as a Legal Assistant in BC

### OVERVIEW

Legal administrative assistants perform secretarial and administrative duties in law offices, legal departments of large firms, real estate companies, land title offices, municipal, provincial and federal courts and government. Assistants handle and format legal correspondence, and review and proofread outgoing documents. Office automation and technological changes have reduced demand for these positions but these positions still play a key role in coordinating internal and external communications.

Legal assistants have hands-on practical experience and substantive knowledge in various areas of legal practice. They have a good understanding of legal terminology, legal processes and common legal documents and good research skills. Those with training and experience in litigation and conveyance procedures, combined with strong computer and communication skills, are more in demand.

Legal assistants can work in various areas, including corporate law, litigation, criminal law, immigration and more. Other names for this profession are legal secretary, real estate secretary or litigation secretary.

Legal assistant is not a certified profession in BC.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Legal assistant positions are considered entry-level and they usually carry out functions in four main areas: communication, organization and coordination, legal work, and general administrative work. They help lawyers by organizing legal documents, gathering information about cases and assisting during trials and hearings. Their research and organization of the facts and paperwork involved in cases help lawyers prepare for trial. Duties and responsibilities vary depending on the size and type of the firm but may include:

- preparing and enter correspondence and legal documents, such as deeds, wills, affidavits and briefs
- review and proofread documents and correspondence to ensure compliance with legal procedures
- scheduling meetings, appointments and interviews with clients, lawyers, witnesses and more
- using knowledge of legal records and procedures to set up and maintain filing systems (including confidential materials and documents)



- opening and distributing regular and electronic incoming mail and other material and co-ordinating the flow of information internally and with other departments or organizations
- undertaking basic administrative and customer service tasks, such as answering phone calls, responding to emails and greeting clients
- creating drafts of contracts, letters and other legal documents
- performing accounting and billing duties

## EDUCATION, TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Completion of a one- or two-year college program or other program for administrative assistants or legal administrative assistants.

Has a solid understanding of legal terminology and procedures

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN BC

- *Public Post-Secondary Institutions*

Camosun – [Legal Administrative Assistant Certificate Program](#)

One-year program provides students with the attitudes, work habits, and skills required to effectively perform the entry-level duties required of those employed in a legal administration environment.

Capilano – [Legal Administrative Assistant Certificate Program](#)

Eight-month program provides a fundamental understanding of the legal system in B.C and with traditional secretarial skills. The program is offered both in the classroom and [online](#).

Douglas College – [Legal Office Administration Certificate](#)

Eight-month (two semester) program can be completed full or part-time.

University of the Fraser Valley (Continuing Education) – [Legal Administrative Assistant Certificate Program](#)

Online 7-month program that includes a 2-week practicum. There are intakes in September and January. Graduates of this program can ladder into the Paralegal Certificate and Paralegal Diploma programs.

Vancouver Community College – [Legal Administrative Assistant Certificate Program](#)

Five-month specialized program for both graduates of VCC's Administrative Assistant program as well as experienced administrative assistants wishing to work in the legal field.



- **Private Colleges**

CDI College – [Legal Administrative Assistant](#)

One of several legal programs offered at the college.

Sprott Shaw – [Legal Administrator](#)

34-week certificate program that includes a 4-week supervised practicum.

## RESOURCES

British Columbia Legal Management Association – [www.bclma.org](http://www.bclma.org)

Canadian-Universities.net - [http://www.canadian-universities.net/Community-Colleges/Programs/Paralegal and Legal Assistant-British Columbia.html](http://www.canadian-universities.net/Community-Colleges/Programs/Paralegal_and_Legal_Assistant-British_Columbia.html)

International Association of Administrative Professionals – [www.iaap-hq.org](http://www.iaap-hq.org)

WorkBC - <https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers/Browse-Career-Profile/1242>

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

BC Law Institute (BCLI) - <https://www.bcli.org/careers>

BC Law Society (Volunteers) - <https://www.lawsociety.bc.ca/about-us/volunteers-and-appointments/>

Canadian University (information about Justice and Legal Organizations in Vancouver offering volunteer opportunities) - [http://www.canadian-universities.net/Volunteer/Justice and Legal-British Columbia-Vancouver.html](http://www.canadian-universities.net/Volunteer/Justice_and_Legal-British_Columbia-Vancouver.html)

Go Volunteer (search on law, legal) - <https://www.govolunteer.ca/>

People's Law School - <https://www.peopleslawschool.ca/volunteer>

Volunteer BC - <https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

West Coast Environmental Law (Volunteer opportunities) - <https://www.wcel.org/about/work-with-us/volunteer-opportunities>

West Coast Leaf- <http://www.westcoastleaf.org/take-action/volunteer/>



## JOB BOARDS

Department of Justice - <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/abt-apd/recru/legala-adroit.html>

Indeed.ca - <https://ca.indeed.com/Legal-Assistant-jobs-in-British-Columbia>

Legal Aid BC - <https://lss.bc.ca/general/careers>

Simply Hired -

<https://www.simplyhired.ca/search?q=paralegal&l=vancouver%2C+bc&job=M6A7DrZMuafO9wcYHOUvTH9FWY-KRfoFCjAFEQ9lySV2wbx75wI0Rw>

Workopolis - <https://www.workopolis.com/jobsearch/legal-assistant-jobs?job=Uud6yyFSH26iGQ56xi0cs0R-PDrogNx0uxFLlcWAaPrPmjBTWw6TNw>

WorkBC - <https://www.workopolis.com/jobsearch/legal-assistant-jobs?job=Uud6yyFSH26iGQ56xi0cs0R-PDrogNx0uxFLlcWAaPrPmjBTWw6TNw>

## LEGAL RECRUITING AGENCIES

Arlyn Recruiting - <https://arlynrecruiting.com/job-postings/>

Eva Lee & Associates - <https://www.evalee.ca/>

Hunter West -

[https://www.hunterwest.ca/opportunities/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI5KPU3PrU6glVSxitBh3oOwCvEAMYAyAAEgKzD\\_D\\_BwE#/jobs](https://www.hunterwest.ca/opportunities/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI5KPU3PrU6glVSxitBh3oOwCvEAMYAyAAEgKzD_D_BwE#/jobs)

R Johnson Legal Recruiting - <https://rjohnsoncorp.com/legal-jobs/>

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