

THE PARALEGAL PULSE



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A Letter From the President

Dear Members,

We are proud to report that CVPA has experienced another remarkable quarter of success and growth, and we're excited to share some highlights with you.

Our membership and partnerships continue to expand, reflecting the strength of our organization and the commitment of our community. We are especially pleased to announce a new partnership with James Madison University's School of Professional & Continuing Studies—another step forward in supporting the development and education of future paralegals across the Commonwealth.

This quarter, we hosted multiple successful Continuing Legal Education (CLE) events, including one in collaboration with the Richmond Bar Association. These programs

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would not be possible without the enthusiastic support of our sponsors, who continue to generously assist with events and CLE opportunities.

In keeping with our mission to serve the community through volunteerism, we are proud to have hosted a successful wills clinic in May. This marks a significant milestone in our outreach efforts, and we look forward to expanding these initiatives in the months to come.

We are also pleased to share that our Board has grown with the addition of two new members, bringing fresh energy and ideas to our leadership. Encouragingly, new partnerships and support are now approaching us—demonstrating that CVPA is increasingly recognized as a valued and respected presence in the legal community.

Looking ahead, we are excited about continued membership growth, new partnerships, and our ongoing efforts to uphold CVPA's mission through volunteerism, networking, CLEs, and mentorship.

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A Letter from the President

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None of this would be possible without you—our dedicated members. Your involvement drives our progress, and we encourage you to stay active, engaged, and never hesitate to share your thoughts and ideas. This is your association, and your voice matters.

Thank you for being part of our journey. We look forward to an even more impactful next quarter together.

Warmest regards,
Jessica Glickman
President

Membership Report as of September 19, 2025

By Carrie Warr, Director, Membership Chair

Active Members: 40
Student Members: 22
Associate Members: 5
Sustaining Members: 2
Total Members: 69



Robneisha Ingram

I will be graduating with my Associate's degree in Paralegal Studies from Reynolds Community College this December and moving on to University of Richmond for my Bachelor's. Next month also marks two years since I began working with the Richmond City Attorney's Office in the Human Services/Family Law division, an experience that has truly deepened my passion for the legal field. I'm also excited to share that I recently joined the CVPA Board as the Student Liaison. It's an honor to serve in this role, and I look forward to connecting with fellow students and supporting the growth of our association.

Outside of work and school, I'm passionate about health and wellness. I've recently committed to a consistent workout routine and enjoy setting personal fitness goals. I also love spending time with my close-knit family, especially for movie nights and weekend get-togethers. A fun fact about me: I enjoy reading motivational and inspirational books that keep me grounded and focused on personal growth.



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Limited Licensure Paraprofessional Programs to Address Justice Gap in Virginia

By Nicholas Tambellini

It comes packaged in multiple names across several states: Legal Paraprofessional (“LP”), Licensed Paralegal Practitioner (“LLP”), Licensed Paralegal (“LP”), Licensed Legal Paraprofessional (“LLP”), and Limited License Legal Technician (“LLLT”). Four states, since 2019, have offered legal professionals an opportunity to represent low and middle-income clients for certain practice areas, without need for attorney supervision in court. A non-attorney legal professional is not legally able to represent clients for most states, including Virginia.

The Legal Services Corporation (“LSC”) determined from a study performed in 2022, in partnership with NORC of the University of Chicago, that 92% of low-income Americans do not receive proper legal help for their civil legal problems. The effect is that many end up representing themselves, without the knowledge and expertise to effectively understand all aspects of their case. Licensed paraprofessionals offer the lower-cost option and knowledge of a trained legal professional, if access to pro bono attorneys and legal aid is limited.

The roots of current limited licensing programs for paraprofessionals stem from Washington State’s initial efforts, operating a program from 2012–2020, disbanded due to development and cost of the program. The state of Utah formed a program of their own in 2019. Arizona, Oregon, and Minnesota soon followed, each using their own distinct moniker. Texas is the latest state to consider the option, set to vote on a bill in 2025 for implementation of a licensed legal paraprofessional program.

The delicate balance between how much representation power to give to non-lawyers is front and center for the states previously mentioned. “What is considered when practicing law?”, the Supreme Court of Texas raised about their proposed program. In Oregon and Minnesota, LPs are only able to represent clients in housing and family law. Arizona paraprofessionals with licensure can represent clients in family law, limited jurisdiction civil law, criminal (certain misdemeanor and initial appearance), juvenile, and administrative law.

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LLP Programs (continued)

States create various stipulations in their programs to establish the credibility of licensed paraprofessionals. This includes subject matter exams in the allowed practice areas, mandated hours of area practice prior to seeking licensure, education requirements, and various levels of attorney supervision and involvement. In Minnesota for example, LPs are required to have attorney supervision, although the attorney does not need to supervise in court. Licensed paraprofessionals in some of these states are not required to have residency in the state, offering representation from a larger pool of legal professionals.

The advantages and disadvantages of licensure programs center on limitations of practice areas, relationships with attorneys, and maintaining the licensure programs from a cost-basis. The Texas Supreme Court speaks to the confusion in placing paraprofessionals one step closer to attorneys, asking questions from their review period that include who oversees the program, what resources paralegals will have in the program, and how to classify those practicing. In the case of Texas, LLPs may need to register as LLCs.

Paraprofessional licensure is a low-cost alternative for representation in high-volume practice areas. It creates an avenue for prospective lawyers and recent law school graduates to gain practice experience as a paraprofessional, under the guidance of attorneys. The disadvantages include having non-attorneys offer advice and representation that is to the detriment of their client. The Texas Supreme Court suggested an ethics hotline for paraprofessionals in the proposed program along with clear guidance on how resources can be accessed.

In the Commonwealth, the law mandates that only attorneys represent clients in court, precluding paraprofessionals from taking a more independent role in representation of clients. The justice gap is addressed primarily by legal aid organizations and pro bono services that address similar practice areas as states with existing paraprofessional licensures, such as housing and debt collection. The move to adopt licensure programming across multiple states over the past decade speaks to a shift in how state judiciaries view legal paraprofessionals and their impact on clients. In Virginia, one of only four states that allows people to become lawyers without attending law school, a paraprofessional licensure program may help address the justice gap by offering additional representative services from qualified legal professionals.

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LLP Programs (continued)

Articles:

<https://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/blog/how-states-are-using-non-lawyers-to-address-the-access-to-justice-gap/>

<https://www.abajournal.com/legalrebels/article/rebels-podcast-episode-104>

<https://ekuonline.eku.edu/blog/paralegal/limited-license-paraprofessionals-lpp-paralegal-bridging-gaps/>

<https://www.estrinreport.com/limited-licensing-for-paralegals-its-finally-a-reality/>

<https://blog.texasbarpractice.com/new-rules-paralegals-legal-services>

<https://www.billtrack50.com/billdetail/1816695>

<https://justicegap.lsc.gov/>



2025 NALA Conference and Expo

By Rich Hahn, ACP

Four members of the Commonwealth of Virginia Paralegal Association (CVPA) traveled to Atlantic from July 9th through July 12th to attend the 50th Annual Conference and Expo of the National Association of Legal Assistant (NALA). Those members were CVPA Vice President Donna Donavant, CVPA NALA Liaison Rich Hahn, and active members Tracey Huang and Pamela Person to obtain up to 12.5 hours of continuing legal education credit (CLE) and network with paralegals from all over the country.

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2025 NALA Conference and Expo (continued)

The Conference and Expo started on the evening of Wednesday July 9th, with a pre-registration happy hour where attendees could pick up their conference name badges and swag bags and catch up with friends and colleagues.

The official opening of the 2025 NALA Conference and Expo was on Thursday July 10th and instead of starting with the traditional keynote session it started with four NALA Board members and one volunteer taking the participants, who were in a costume of the decade they were talking about, the five decades of NALA's existence, the current events of those decades and NALA influence on the paralegal profession in each of those decades.

After a break of one hour for attendees to attend the expo the 2025 NALA Annual Membership and Awards meeting, which included lunch, was called to order and presided over by NALA President Cheryl Nodarse, ACP (Ms. Nodarse was re-elected NALA President by the NALA Board of Directors at their Spring Board of Directors meeting). The first order of business for the membership meeting was the announcement of the organization selected to be NALA's designated charity for the 2025 Conference and Expo. This year's charity is **Avanzar** which is an organization that helps victims of domestic violence. Then the minutes of the 2024 Annual membership meeting were adopted via the recommendation of the "2024 NALA Annual Membership Meeting Minutes Review Committee" and the rules for the meeting were adopted. President Nodarse then appointed the members of the 2025 Annual Membership Minutes Review Committee which now includes **CVPA's NALA Liaison**. The membership then heard reports from the following NALA standing committees: Continuing Educational Council, Professional Development Committee, and the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee. Following the committee reports President Nodarse then recognized the seven new affiliated associations, which included **CVPA**, that became NALA Affiliates during NALA's 2024-25 year.

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2025 NALA Conference and Expo (continued)

After the recognition of the new affiliates President Nodarse recognized all past NALA Presidents in attendance at this year's conference.

The meeting then moved on to the following awards:

Student of the Year: Which was won by CVPA's own Carrie Warr

President's Award: Which was won by Former NALA President Melissa Hamilton, who will be known as NALA's first and hopefully last virtual President as her term was seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Founders Award: The Alabama Association of Paralegals Inc.

Pinnacle Award: Los Angeles Paralegal Association Newsletter Committee

Unsung Hero's Hall of Fame Inductees: Karen Schele of Phoenix, Arizona and Candy Reiley of Sun City Arizona.

Then after that the result of the elections for the NALA Board of Directors which are as follows:

Vice President: Peonca S. Grier, CP

Secretary: Debby J. Sawyer, ACP

Treasurer: Vicki L. Kasper, ACP

At Large Directors: Jeanne M. Elliott, ACP and Bridget M. Stuhr, ACP

The 2025 NALA Annual Membership Meeting was then adjourned so attendees could attend either the Certified Paralegal Exam Review Course CLE on Bankruptcy or the CLE on "Contracts in Concert, Music Industry Contracts". After those CLE sessions concluded there was another CLE session on "Critical Thinking Skills" for attendees interested in taking NALA's Certified Paralegal Examination.

Also, at this time 2025 Annual Meeting of NALA Affiliates convened. As in the NALA membership meeting the seven new NALA Affiliated Associations, including CVPA, which joined NALA during its 2024-25 year were recognized.

Following that recognition the results of the elections for NALA Affiliated Associations Director (AA Director) and Affiliated Associations Secretary (AA Secretary) were announced and current AA Secretary Melissa Klimpel, ACP was elected NALA AA Director for the 2025-26 term.

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2025 NALA Conference and Expo (continued)

The election for AA Secretary for the 2025–26 term, in which CVPA's **Rich Hahn** NALA Liaison was a nominee was very close as what is usually the only AA ballot/election that takes place from 9AM Central time on June 1st and end at 5PM Central time on June 30th ended in a tie and forced on runoff election in which Nita Serano of the Tampa Bay Paralegal Association was elected NALA AA Secretary for the 2025–26 term.

The meeting concluded with the presentation of the following awards. Several **NALA Affiliates Awards** of which **CVPA's Executive Committee** was one of the recipients.

Affiliate of The Year Award: The Nebraska Association of Paralegals

The Affiliated Associations Annual Meeting Concluded with the Affiliated Associations Exchange Presentation by the Alabama Association of Paralegals, Inc. on how to recruit and train new Board of Direct Members on their duties to the association.

The first day of the 2025 NALA Conference and Expo concluded with the NALA Affiliated Associations Showcase where CVPA had a display and giveaways that reflected the 1970's theme of the conference. CVPA's table was very popular Friday of the conference was mostly a day of CLE, except for roundtable discussion held during lunch by the various NALA standing committees. The day concluded with the Installation of NALA's 2025–26 Board of Directors followed by NALA's 50th Anniversary Gala dinner which was a formal red-carpet affair with a brief program, wonderful food, conversation and dancing.

Saturday was a full day of CLE followed by a brief closing session where attendees could give high level feedback and ask questions.

All in all, the 2025 NALA Conference and Exp was a wonderful experience and a great celebration of NALA's golden anniversary.

The **2026 NALA Conference and Expo** will be held **July 16th to 18th at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, in Denver, Colorado** so look for more information on next year's conference from CVPA in early January.

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&
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Rebecca Hubbard Class of 2018



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Gina Melendez

I'm on track to graduate this fall with an Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies from Reynolds Community College. I plan to continue my education at the University of Richmond to pursue a Bachelor's Degree, with long-term goals of specializing in Personal Injury and Criminal Law.

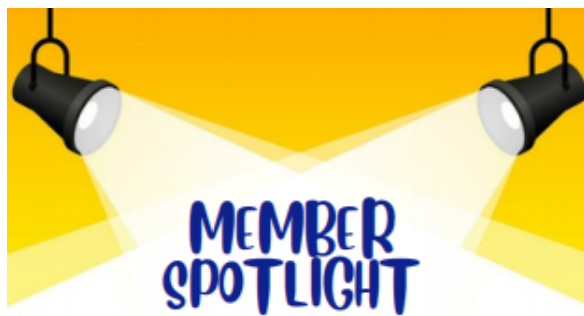
Fun fact: My best friend is my Chihuahua, Lucky—tiny in size but big on personality! He's been my study buddy, stress therapist, and personal cheerleader through it all.

In my free time, I enjoy long walks, reading, and spending quality time with my family. I'm also a proud member of the Commonwealth of Virginia Paralegal Association.

Ultimately, I aspire to volunteer with pro bono legal services to help low-income individuals and eventually build a freelance legal support business serving law firms and agencies around the world. I'm passionate about learning, growing, and making a meaningful impact in the legal field.

Outside of work and school, I'm passionate about health and wellness. I've recently committed to a consistent workout routine and enjoy setting personal fitness goals. I also love spending time with my close-knit family, especially for movie nights and weekend get-togethers. A fun fact about me: I enjoy reading motivational and inspirational books that keep me grounded and focused on personal growth.





Nakia Blackwell

I am a Paralegal at EarnIn, a fintech company headquartered in Mountain View, CA. We offer same-day pay to our customers, whom we refer to as community members. Our mission is to "reimagine the way money moves to empower every person's potential."

At EarnIn, I support the litigation and regulatory docket while expanding my knowledge in product development, intellectual property, and privacy law.

Before transitioning in-house, I spent the majority of my legal career in private practice, primarily focusing on litigation. My favorite practice areas (in no particular order) include labor and employment, white collar crime, product liability, and construction. I've also worked extensively in government affairs across the local, state, and federal levels.

I'm passionate about connection, culture, and community. I'm actively involved in EarnIn's employee resource groups and recently stepped into a leadership role as a co-lead of Black @ EarnIn.

Giving back is an important part of my identity. I've contributed pro bono work to causes such as social justice, criminal reform, divorce support, and cancer clinics. One of my proudest achievements was co-authoring a compassionate release petition for a conditional pardon, submitted to a former Governor of Virginia.

I also enjoy working with younger generations. I coach a running club for elementary school students and mentor young girls.

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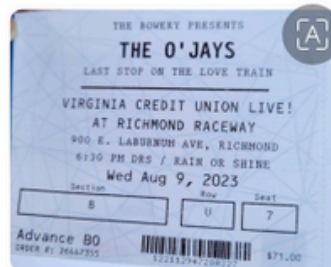


Nakia Blackwell (continued)

A few fun facts about me:

- My friends call me the “walking book of knowledge” because I’m always full of random information and love sharing what I know.
- I’m a live music enthusiast. One summer, I attended four concerts in four cities across two states in just six days. I also enjoy road trips, travel, and new adventures.
- I love cooking and baking, and I once bartended part-time. That skill has a way of resurfacing at family and friend gatherings, where I often find myself behind the bar.

Networking through CVPA has been a great experience, and I’ve truly appreciated the opportunity to connect with local peers.



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