

O & A with an OSBA Certified Paralegal

By Mindi Schaefer (Poling | Petrello)

When I sat for the OSBA Paralegal Certification exam in 2010, I was lucky to have the best source of information possible ... an already OSBA certified paralegal. I knew once I passed the exam that I wanted to “pay it forward” by helping future OSBA Certified Paralegals. To do so, I created a study group for paralegals through the Paralegal Association of Central Ohio (“PACO”). I have also answered countless questions about certification. To follow are several of those questions and answers.

Why did you decide to become an OSBA Certified Paralegal?

- I decided to become certified because I wanted to solidify my paralegal experience and education with certification. I felt the certification offered by the Ohio State Bar Association provided me with the best avenue to do so.

What are the benefits of becoming an OSBA Certified Paralegal?

- I believe paralegal certification provides a potential edge for one paralegal over another in the case of a potential job. Paralegal certification illustrates the paralegal has a greater degree of knowledge of the legal field. Pursuing certification shows I am dedicated to furthering my education and experience and that I take pride in my profession.

Do you believe one day the State of Ohio or any state will require certification for paralegals?

- I believe certification of paralegals provides further validity to my profession and the important role that paralegals play in the legal field. I do, in fact, believe there is a potential one day for states to require certification of paralegals.

How has OSBA paralegal certification impacted or influenced your current job at Poling | Petrello?

- I believe when our clients recognize that I am certified that they are even more confident in the job that our firm can and will do for them. I believe it shows our clients that the firm staffs high quality and educated paralegals.

Is Poling | Petrello supportive of new paralegals in your office pursuing the same certification?

- Absolutely. My firm is very supportive of its staff and even more supportive of their pursuits to better themselves. In fact, once our current and newest paralegals are eligible, they have expressed interest in sitting for the exam.

Deciding whether to pursue certification has many factors to consider and these are only a small portion of the questions one could have. With any decision in life, one must balance the pros, cons, good, and bad and decide what is best for them personally.

Mindi Schaefer, Paralegal
Poling | Petrello
mschaefer@poling-law.com