

MORCA-GEORGETOWN
Paralegal Program

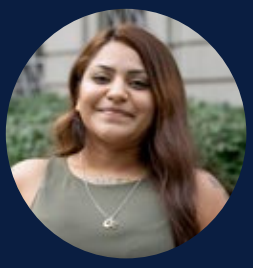
About the Program

The MORCA-Georgetown Paralegal Program combines rigorous academics and professional development training to prepare formerly incarcerated individuals for successful careers in the field of law. The program was developed through a partnership between Georgetown University, the Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (MORCA), and the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES).

Participating Paralegal Fellows complete an intensive certificate program through the Georgetown University Law Center in 24 weeks. The curriculum includes legal research and writing, corporate law, torts, contracts, legal technology, ethics, digital literacy, job readiness, and more. After completing their academic coursework, Fellows receive employment support with the opportunity to interview with law firms and other employers in the D.C. metro area for positions as paralegals and other legal support staff.

The program aims to address the significant barriers to employment in the legal profession that formerly incarcerated people face and open doors to fulfilling careers. It also works with employers to foster more inclusive recruiting practices and advance second-chance hiring in the industry. While in the program, Fellows gain both the education and professional training to supplement their existing talents; many developed extensive legal research and analysis skills through their direct experience with the criminal legal system. The program recognizes and builds upon this knowledge so that graduates can excel professionally after incarceration and over the course of their careers.

"It opened my eyes to see that just because you've been incarcerated doesn't mean that you can't be successful."



Jessica Trejo

2023 graduate and Equal Opportunity Specialist, D.C. Office of Human Rights

Employer Partnerships

Our employer partners empower rising professionals and advance second-chance hiring in the District. They gain highly motivated, Georgetown-trained paralegals who bring a unique and valuable perspective to their workplaces.

Georgetown invites employers to consider graduating Fellows for full-time positions through on-site interviews at the end of the program. Participating employers receive complete student profiles, including transcripts, resumes, writing samples, and background information before determining which Fellows to interview.

Separately, we also work with employers to meet their unique hiring needs and connect them with strong candidates outside of the fall hiring window.

Georgetown works closely with partners over the course of the program and throughout Fellows' employment to address any needs or concerns and to provide support.



Past Employers

Arnold & Porter
DC Office of the Attorney General
DC Office of Human Rights
DC Public Defender Service Law
Office of Miles Franklin
Legal Aid DC
Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project
Neighborhood Legal Services Program
Outten & Golden
Relman Colfax
Rising for Justice
Venable LLP
WilmerHale



Partner With Us

We are seeking employer partners interested in welcoming a MORCA-Georgetown Paralegal Fellow to their team in September 2025. Please contact Program Manager Maya Hambrick at mh1849@georgetown.edu for more information.

Key Dates:

April 2025: Program Begins
August 2025: Academic Program Ends
September 2025: On-Site Interviews with Employer Partners

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
MORCA
DOES DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR



paralegalstudies.georgetown.edu

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Calendar

January-March 2025	Admissions
April 2025	Academic prep period First academic session begins
June 2025	Second academic session begins
Sept 2025	Interview prep period On-site interviews Graduation

Curriculum

The program's curriculum is designed and taught by Georgetown University faculty, and graduates earn a certificate in Paralegal Studies from Georgetown University Law Center. Participants take class in person full time while also receiving individualized support and mentorship from program alumni, program staff, and the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES). As Georgetown students, they gain access to tools and databases including WestLaw, LexisNexis, CaseMap, and TimeMap.

Coursework:

- Contract Law
- Tort Law
- Constitutional Law
- Litigation and Procedure
- Corporate Law
- Legal Research and Writing
- Legal Technology
- Family Law
- Civil and Criminal Evidence
- Legal Grammar
- Investigations
- Ethics for Paralegals

Additional Seminars:

- IP and Trademark Law
- Employment and Labor Law
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Immigration Law
- International Trade Law
- Disability and Elder Law
- Legislation
- Landlord and Tenant Law
- Professional Development
- Legal Ethical Standards



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Frequently Asked Questions

How are the MORCA-Georgetown Fellows selected for the program?
Our admissions process comprises an application, phone screening, background check, academic assessments (writing and standardized), as well as an in-person panel interview. Applicants are required to have at least a high school diploma or GED and reside in Washington, D.C. We look for candidates with previous legal experience or an interest in a legal career who can commit to an intensive 24-week program and full-time employment for at least one year following graduation.

Do you share information about the Fellows' criminal backgrounds, and can we consider that as part of hiring decisions?
We will share the nature and timing of criminal offenses with our potential employer partners in advance for review before on-site interviews. Each organization should follow its own hiring guidelines, which we understand may include an independent background check when a conditional offer is made. However, we encourage all employers to address any potential issues or concerns and engage internal stakeholders before an offer is extended. Program staff is available to answer any questions and provide guidance on hiring. We encourage all employers to consider a candidate's offense in their decision to extend an offer only if it would directly and significantly impact their ability to carry out their responsibilities.

Would we hire the paralegal directly or do we hire through Georgetown as an agency of some sort?
You would hire the paralegal directly. Georgetown partners have the option to sign an agreement or letter of intent outlining the process, but the paralegal goes through usual hiring practices directly with the employer.

How does the interview process work?
Georgetown will host on-site interviews with current graduating Fellows in September 2024 for interested employers. Employers participating in that process will have access in advance to student profiles, including transcripts, resumes, writing samples, and background information. After reviewing those materials, employers will have the opportunity to interview several of the Paralegal Fellows, and program staff will be available to assist with finding mutually beneficial matches, if needed. Outside of the interview process, we also can work with individual employers on a case-by-case basis depending on their staffing needs and timing to identify suitable Fellows or past alumni of the program.

How much are we expected to pay them? They should receive your organization's standard salary for an entry-level paralegal/legal assistant, including benefits.

Are we expected to cover health insurance?
They should be provided with the same benefits package as would any paralegal you hire.

Is there anything else we should know about hiring?
We understand that some organizations have different titles and structures for paralegal-related work, such as legal assistant, legal researcher, or client intake specialist. We will work with employers to explore what positions would be a good fit for a graduate of the program. All paralegals are "at will" hires, with the expectation of a one-year position with an option to extend. Georgetown will be in touch with firms and Fellows throughout their employment to provide additional support and mentorship.

Is there someone at another partner firm we can talk to about their experience with hiring and onboarding? Yes. If you're interested in speaking to individuals from one of our existing partners, please let us know.

Who have you partnered with in the past?
For past cohorts, we have partnered with such firms and agencies as Arnold & Porter, the DC Office of the Attorney General, DC Office of Human Rights, DC Public Defender Service, the Law Office of Miles Franklin, Legal Aid DC, Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project, Neighborhood Legal Services Program, Outten & Golden, Relman Colfax, Rising for Justice, Venable LLP, and WilmerHale.