

Paralegal

Washington Innocence Project

Location	Reports to	Status
Seattle Washington	Litigation Director	Full time exempt

About Washington Innocence Project

Washington Innocence Project provides free investigative and legal services to people with viable claims of actual innocence in Washington State. We work to identify, rectify, and prevent wrongful convictions through direct representation, support for freed and exonerated people, policy reform, education, and system change. WashIP is an independent nonprofit and a founding member of the Innocence Network.

Position Overview

The Paralegal is a central member of WashIP's litigation team and supports cases from initial review through investigation, forensic testing, court proceedings, and appeal. The role combines complex records work, communication with courts and agencies, litigation support, case-file management, and substantive review of applications and case materials. The Paralegal helps ensure that long-running, document-intensive matters continue moving forward accurately and efficiently.

How We Work

WashIP is a small, collaborative organization. Team members have meaningful responsibility for their work and are expected to communicate clearly about progress, capacity, barriers, and deadlines. We value careful work, practical judgment, curiosity, dependable follow-through, and a willingness to ask questions and receive feedback. Our work requires us to examine assumptions in police reports, trial records, prior court decisions, and other official accounts rather than treating those accounts as settled.

Primary Responsibilities

- Maintain accurate and usable electronic and physical case files, including consistent naming, indexing, and documentation practices.
- Identify needed trial, appellate, police, forensic, medical, and agency records and determine the appropriate court, agency, custodian, or archive from which to request them.
- Prepare, track, and follow up on court-record, public-record, and other case-related requests; document what was requested, received, and remains outstanding.
- Develop effective professional relationships with clerks and records custodians and troubleshoot incomplete, inconsistent, or unavailable productions.
- Prepare, proofread, format, file, and serve pleadings and supporting materials in compliance with statewide and local court rules.
- Maintain litigation calendars and help the team monitor deadlines, hearing dates, filing requirements, and service obligations.
- Create accurate indexes, chronologies, inventories, and concise summaries from large records.
- Support DNA and other forensic-testing projects, including evidence inventories, laboratory and agency communications, and chain-of-custody documentation.
- Conduct targeted legal, docket, and factual research using court websites, legal research platforms, and other reliable sources.

- Assist with initial review by analyzing applications and case materials, identifying missing information, and preparing procedural or factual summaries.
- Support client correspondence, prison communications, scheduling, and other case-related logistics.
- Respond to prospective-client and general-line communications with empathy, accurate documentation, and appropriate boundaries.
- Communicate task status, anticipated completion dates, barriers, and workload concerns promptly to assigning team members.
- Support interns, volunteers, and pro bono projects as assigned and identify practical improvements to team guides and systems.
- Track and report grant-funded activities and assist with other administrative or litigation-team projects as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications

- Paralegal certificate, relevant degree, or an equivalent combination of legal training and substantial litigation-support experience.
- Experience obtaining and organizing legal, court, agency, or public records.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to communicate professionally with courts, agencies, clients, and colleagues.
- Demonstrated ability to manage multiple assignments, maintain accurate records, and meet deadlines with limited day-to-day oversight.
- Proficiency with Microsoft 365 and Adobe Acrobat and an ability to learn case-management, cloud-storage, and court-filing systems.
- Commitment to client-centered service, public-interest work, equity, and criminal legal reform.

Experience That Would Be Useful

- Work in criminal defense, appellate, post-conviction, civil-rights, legal-aid, or other litigation practice.
- Familiarity with Washington court rules, local filing practices, appellate dockets, or public-record requests.
- Experience preparing and e-filing pleadings, maintaining litigation calendars, or coordinating service.
- Experience organizing large case files or creating indexes, chronologies, evidence inventories, or records summaries.
- Exposure to DNA, medical, digital, or other forensic records.
- Experience with legal research platforms or case-management systems such as LegalServer.

What Will Support Success

- Careful attention to detail combined with practical judgment about when a workable solution is sufficient to move the matter forward.
- Initiative in identifying next steps, paired with a willingness to consult existing guides and ask focused questions when needed.
- Consistent follow-through and early communication when a task is delayed, unclear, or larger than expected.
- The ability to understand how an individual task fits into the broader case and to organize work so another team member can readily use it.
- Receptivity to feedback and an interest in strengthening legal-administrative and litigation-support skills.
- Patience and professionalism when navigating cumbersome and inconsistent systems.

Work Location and Demands

This position follows a hybrid work schedule. Staff must work at least 50 percent of their time in the office and are expected to be in the office on Tuesdays. Outside that shared in-office day, staff have flexibility to establish their daily schedules based on case demands and personal circumstances. WashIP's office is in Pioneer Square, within several blocks of regional train service, light rail, and several major bus routes. Travel within Washington may be required for court, prison, records, or litigation support. Occasional extended hours may be necessary around filings and hearings.

The position involves sustained use of a computer and telephone and may require moving case files or other office materials. The work regularly involves records and conversations concerning incarceration, sexual assault, domestic violence, racism, discrimination, serious injury, and death. WashIP will provide reasonable accommodations for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities.

Compensation and Benefits

Starting hourly \$35 to \$40 depending on qualifications and experience.

- Medical, dental, and vision coverage
- Retirement contribution match (5%)
- Vacation and sick leave accrual
- Monthly transit and parking stipend
- Professional development support
- Flexible and hybrid work arrangements

How to Apply

Email a resume and short letter of interest to work@wainnocenceproject.org with "Paralegal" in the subject line. The letter should explain your interest in the position and describe experience that prepares you for the work. Applications received by October 23, 2026, will receive full consideration. The position will remain open until filled.

Selected candidates will participate in two interviews. The first will take place between November 10, 2026, and November 16, 2026. Second interviews for those advancing will take place between November 30, 2026, and December 4, 2026. Finalists may be asked to complete a brief, job-related exercise and provide professional references. Candidates should be able to start no later than January 4, 2027.

Equal Opportunity and Inclusion

WashIP is committed to building a staff that reflects the clients and communities we serve. We strongly encourage applications from people who have been directly affected by the criminal legal system and from members of communities disproportionately harmed by wrongful conviction and incarceration.

WashIP is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate in employment based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, genetic information, former incarceration, or any other status protected by law.