

BCBA Family Law Section Chair

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There's a new professional in town: Licensed Legal Paraprofessional (“LLP”). The inaugural LLP cohort was sworn in on June 20, 2024. This initial cohort is starting their third year in practice, changing the landscape of family law cases for the better. While LLPs are not new per se, the roles that they are taking in the legal community are continuing to change and develop since their inception into the practice. As of the end of 2025, there are 108 LLPs in the State of Colorado. The LLP Exam is now given 1 time per year in November.

Governing Rules and LLPs Defined: The Colorado Supreme Court approved rules creating the LLP license in March 2023, and LLPs are licensed by the Court, through the Office of LLP Admissions under OARC, to provide certain legal services in specified family law matters only. LLPs are governed by [Rule 207](#). A Licensed Legal Paraprofessional is defined under Rule 207.1. Licensed Legal Paraprofessionals (“LLPs”) are individuals licensed by the Supreme Court pursuant to Rule 207 to perform certain types of legal services only under the conditions set forth by the Colorado Supreme Court.

Pathway to Becoming an LLP: Rule 207.8 governs the admissions of LLPs within the State of Colorado. There are two (2) pathways to qualify to take the examination for admission as defined under Rule 207.8: (1) Education Plus Experience Path; and (2) Experience Only Path.

Let's first discuss the Education Plus Experience pathway. The key takeaways for education and experience are as follows: (1) Applicants applying under this path must: (i) demonstrate that the applicant has worked 1,500 hours in employment constituting substantive law related practical experience, which must include 500 hours of experience in Colorado family law, within the three years immediately preceding the date of filing the LLP application; and (ii) have received one of the following academic degrees or certificates: (a) a J.D. or LL.B. degree from a law school approved by the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association or a state-accredited law school; (b) an associate's degree in legal or paralegal studies, including at least 30 credit hours in law, including legal research and writing, from an accredited school; (c) a bachelor's degree in legal or paralegal studies, including at least 30 credit hours in law, including legal research and writing, from an accredited school; (d) a bachelor's degree in any subject from an accredited school plus a paralegal certificate, which may be obtained from the same or different accredited school, which includes at least 30 credit hours in law, including legal research and writing; or (e) a first professional law degree from a law school in a country other than the United States with an LL.M. qualifying such applicant to sit for the Colorado bar examination under C.R.C.P. 204.3; or (f) a master's degree in legal studies from an accredited school.

Next, we discuss the pathway through experience only. A Colorado LLP applicant applying under the experience-only path must demonstrate that the applicant: (a) has worked 4,500 hours in employment constituting substantive law-related practical experience within the five years immediately preceding the date of filing the LLP application; and (b) within the hours described in paragraph (a), has worked 1,500 hours of experience in Colorado family law the three years immediately preceding the date of filing the LLP application.

Each applicant must take and pass a comprehensive Colorado LLP Examination that includes testing on topics such as family law, professional conduct rules, and any other topics designated by the Supreme Court. They must also show they have the character and fitness to practice and show they have completed an Ethics course from an accredited school that teaches the rules of professional conduct.

In Practice: A major and instrumental rule change that became effective on December 1, 2025, gave LLPs the ability to provide much needed assistance to their clients in the courtroom, among other things. The initial rules licensing LLPs allowed LLPs to give an opening statement, closing argument, and make objections for their clients; however, they were not allowed to examine witnesses, requiring their clients to proceed essentially pro se when examining witnesses on direct and cross examination. This made the practical side of the LLPs practice more difficult, as they could only do so much in the courtroom. The impact of the newest rule change for LLPs has been a gamechanger by allowing LLPs to conduct examination of witnesses in the courtroom. LLPs continue to help provide legal services to those that don't have a lot of means and they provide access to justice to so many who would otherwise proceed pro se. As the Colorado Judicial Branch has reported, almost 75% of those in family law cases proceed without representation, the LLP tier was meant to assist with that lower wage gap.

So what can't they do? The first place to look if you are unsure of what a LLP is allowed to do is to look at the Rules Governing LLPs. Rest assured, LLPs have worked hard to get where they are and they want to ensure that they keep their license. Highlights as to what LLPs can't do are as follows: (1) Practice in an area outside of family law; (2) Represent someone in a punitive contempt action; (3) Take a case where common law or date of common law is at issue; and (4) a disputed jurisdiction issue. For the full list of what LLPs are not able to handle, please look at Rule 207. The biggest thing to keep in mind is that once the common law issue or jurisdictional issues have been resolved, the LLP can jump back in to negotiate, mediate, and or litigate the remainder of the action.

Colorado Licensed Paraprofessional Rules of Professional Conduct: LLPs, are regulated through the Office of Attorney Regulation Counsel just like attorneys. LLPs must follow the [Colorado Licensed Paraprofessional Rules of Professional Conduct](#). For example, LLPs must comply with confidentiality rules, conflict rules, court conduct rules, and money-handling rules just like licensed attorneys do. LLPs must also pay their annual registration fee and must

complete [30 credits](#) of continuing legal education (5 to include 1 EDI and 4 ethics) within a 3 year period.

LLP Employment: LLPs have several different types of employment options. They can be within a firm with licensed attorneys practicing as a LLP or hybrid as a LLP/paralegal. They can also have a solo practice. There are many positives to each route the LLP could take.

If a LLP works within a firm, the LLP is provided many mentorship and learning opportunities as they navigate the practice of law. A downside can be that they may not be able to select the types of cases they take. A solo LLP has a lot of freedom to take the types of cases they want to take. A downside may be the realities of navigating how to practice law and how to run a business (which is similar to an attorney solo practitioner). My firm has incorporated LLPs from the start and if anyone is interested in incorporating LLPs into their firm, please reach out as I'd be happy to discuss this with you. Ultimately, the best thing attorneys can do for LLPs is be there as mentors so that LLPs know that they belong in the legal community.

Types of Representation of Clients by LLPs: (1) Full scope; (2) Limited scope; (3) Unbundled services; and (4) Other miscellaneous roles. Some LLPs will represent clients in a full scope capacity, while others will provide representation in a limited scope capacity. Many LLPs are also providing unbundled services to their clients to continue with the lower cost model of representation. We are also seeing LLPs fill roles such as a Child and Family Investigator ("CFI") or mediator. These are all types of affordable representation that are needed in family law especially for clients in legal deserts.

Benefits: A couple benefits to having LLPs are: (1) they can be more affordable to clients who otherwise would go in front of the court pro se; and (2) they are providing assistance to clients in legal deserts across the state. Having assisted at the most recent LLP Practicum in June of this year, and also as co-counsel for LLPs at my firm, I am provided with a unique opportunity to see firsthand the amazing work these individuals are doing day in and day out. They are knowledgeable, well prepared, and compassionate, trying to obtain the best possible outcome for their client.

Conclusion: LLPs have stepped into this new role with professionalism and effective representation. LLPs are required, just like attorneys, to take an examination, pass an ethics course, and maintain continuing legal education. It is important that we welcome LLPs into the legal community with civility and professionalism.