



# HOUSTON METROPOLITAN PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

## CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION POLICY

HMPA Bylaws, Section 3.02: **Continuing Legal Education Policy.** All members renewing as Voting Members must provide evidence of completion of 8 hours of continuing legal education as follows:

### (A) Definitions:

(1) "Association" refers to Houston Metropolitan Paralegal Association.

(2) "Continuing Legal Education" means education courses, classes, videos, or reading material related to legal issues, paralegal issues, administrative issues pertaining to law office administration or management, or in connection with the pursuit of an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, an advanced degree, a paralegal or legal assistant certificate, self-study, or a study course for certification by the National Association of Legal Assistants, the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, or other certifying body that may from time to time be recognized by the Association.

(3) "Hour" means clock hour. One hour of classroom time equals one hour of continuing legal education credit.

(4) "Voting Member" means a member as described under Section 3.01(a) of the Bylaws of the Houston Legal Assistants Association.

(5) "Regular Member" means a member as described under Section 3.01 (B) of the Bylaws of the Houston Legal Assistants Association.

(6) "Evidence" means a certificate, letter of completion or computer printout from the entity or institution providing continuing legal education.

(7) "Self Study" means study undertaken independent of an educational institution in connection with legal related issues.

(8) "Renewal" refers to forms submitted by current members of the Association to renew membership and not persons applying for new membership.

(9) "Membership year" means the duration of membership covered by one year's dues.

### (B) Guidelines

(1) Members planning to renew as Voting Members must attach to their renewal forms evidence of completion of 8 hours of continuing legal education during the preceding membership year.

(2) Evidence may be in the form of a certificate of attendance, a letter of completion, or a computer printout. The name of the organization providing continuing legal education must be clearly indicated, as well as the date of the event, the topic, the name of the speaker, and the number of hours attended. Approved organizations include, but are not limited to, paralegal professional associations such as the Houston Legal Assistants Association, National Association of Legal Assistants, National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Legal Assistants Division - State Bar of Texas, accredited colleges and universities, paralegal and legal assistant certification programs, and organizations specializing in providing continuing legal education.

(3) Approved topics include legal issues, paralegal issues, administrative issues pertaining to law offices administration and management, courses taken while participating in a degree program or paralegal/legal assistant certification program, and study courses taken in preparation to sit for the Certified Legal Assistant/Certified Legal Assistant Specialist designations or the voluntary Certification Examination administered by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization of the State Bar of Texas.

(4) Two (2) hours of self-study may be submitted along with 6 hours of classroom continuing legal education to satisfy the requirement. Self study includes reading on legal issues, paralegal issues, administrative issues pertaining to law office administration and management. Evidence of self study must be submitted using the form indicated in Attachment "A".

(5) Those renewals received with evidence of 8 hours of continuing legal education will be processed as "Voting Member" renewals. These members will continue to receive all newsletters and notices of Association meetings, seminars and functions and will be retained on the mailing list for voting purposes pertaining to elections, referendums and changes in Association Bylaws and policies.

(6) Those renewals received without evidence of 8 hours of continuing legal education will be processed as "Regular Member" renewals. These members will continue to receive all newsletters and notices of Association meetings, seminars and functions, but will not be retained on the mailing list for voting purposes pertaining to elections, referendums and changes in Association Bylaws and policies. Dues remain the same as for Voting Members.

(7) Members who did not meet the continuing legal education requirements and who were renewed as Regular Members may upgrade their membership status at any time to Voting Member status by submitting evidence of completion of 8 hours of continuing legal education which will apply to the current renewal year only and may not also be applied to the following renewal year. Restated, members must complete 8 hours of continuing legal education per renewal year to maintain voting status.

(8) Members who complete more than 8 hours of continuing legal education per membership year may not apply the additional hours to the following year.

(9) The Association will routinely determine compliance with the continuing legal education requirements. In the event that questionable or noncompliance evidence is submitted, the Membership Committee will be called upon to make a final determination.

(10) These guidelines are to be applied liberally with emphasis on the philosophy of continuing legal education. It is recognized that the Association is not a regulatory body, but rather a professional organization specifying standards for its membership.

(11) The Association will not provide preapproval for continuing legal education courses.

(12) The Board may amend this policy from time to time as required to meet the needs of the Association.