



LEGAL ASSISTANT/ PARALEGAL PROGRAM

**Sponsor Your
Loved One Today**

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Founded in 1890, Blackstone Career Institute is the oldest distance learning school in the United States. Twenty-five hundred students from all over the U.S. and around the world are currently taking Blackstone courses. All have their reasons for choosing independent study—all are on the road to a brighter future.

Inmates from over 1,800 facilities across the U.S. have turned to Blackstone to improve their understanding of the law. Perhaps you want to increase your knowledge, help others, acquire a skill you can use in the future, or prove to the parole board that you have been working hard on a positive endeavor. Whatever your reason for enrolling, now is the time to begin!

Blackstone makes it easy for you to complete your program entirely by mail without computer or Internet access:

- Receive everything you need for your program by mail.
- Mail your exams to us for grading and grade reports will be mailed back to you.
- Handwritten correspondence and homework assignments are acceptable.

COURSE MATERIALS

Blackstone will provide you with the following tools for your success in the paralegal profession, all of which are included in your program tuition:

Modern American Law

Ten volumes based on the historic Modern American Law series provide an overview of the evolution of the legal system in the U.S. and a thorough background in the basics of the law. Books average 155 pages with almost 2,150 pages in all.

Blackstone Law Glossary

An extra volume gives concise definitions of legal terms and phrases that the paralegal student is likely to encounter, plus the phonetic pronunciation of all words—a valuable asset to keep as a reference.

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law

This is an authoritative and up-to-date dictionary, fully defining over 10,000 terms. This edition is unmatched in readability and ease of use and is a must for every law student.

Writing to Win: The Legal Writer

Forceful writing is one of the most potent weapons of legal advocacy. Writing to Win has taught thousands of practicing lawyers how to write, and it is your gift upon graduation.

Additional Blackstone Study Units

In addition to the ten-volume Modern American Law series, you will receive four more exclusive Blackstone study units to guide you through your studies: Legal Research and Writing—Parts I and II, How to Find a Job as a Paralegal, and Ethics for Paralegals.

Thorough Testing

Thirty one exams and six assignments assist us in assessing your understanding of the concepts taught.

Ample Time

You may finish in as little as four months or use the two full years you are permitted to complete the program. One additional six month extension is available for a nominal fee.

Affordable Tuition

Your tuition cost covers your entire program including all textbooks, study guides, exam and homework evaluation services, and your certificate. The tuition fee can be found on the Enrollment Agreement. Blackstone offers an interest -free, low monthly payment plan to help you finance your education.

Graduation Documents

Upon successful completion of the entire program and tuition payments, you will receive an official transcript and a certificate. A copy of your transcript will be on permanent file and available at a nominal fee.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Study Package 1

Volume I Modern American Law: Law—Its Origin, Nature and Development & Contracts

- Blackstone Law Glossary

Study Package 2

Volume II Modern American Law: Torts

Study Package 3

Volume III Modern American Law: Criminal Law

Study Package 4

Volume IV Modern American Law: Real Property—Part I

Study Package 5

Volume V Modern American Law: Real Property—Part II

Study Package 6

Volume VI Modern American Law: Pleadings and Practice in Civil Actions, Criminal Procedure

Study Package 7

Volume VII Modern American Law: Wills and Trusts

- Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law

(must be financially and academically current to receive)

Study Package 8

Volume VIII Modern American Law: Partnerships and Corporations

Study Package 9

Volume IX Modern American Law: Constitutional Law—Part I

Study Package 10

Volume X Modern American Law: Constitutional Law—Part II

Study Package 11

Volume XI: Legal Research and Writing Study Unit—Part I

Study Package 12

Volume XII: Legal Research and Writing Study Unit—Part II

Study Package 13

Volume XIII: How to Find a Job as a Paralegal Study Unit

Study Package 14

Volume XIV: Ethics for Paralegals Study Unit

Blackstone Career Institute changed life of former inmate

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The thousands of hits we've received – and continue to get – on the article we wrote about Blackstone Career Institute indicates the appeal of the paralegal correspondence course it offers to those in prison.

In fact, it can change their lives, as it did for Michael Harris, who was incarcerated in Arizona and is now a legal administrator/paralegal at Saldivar & Associates, PLLC in Phoenix. And he's just one example.

At any given time, more than 1,200 incarcerated students are participating in the Institute's Correspondence Paralegal Program for Inmates. The old-fashioned paper-based course – no Internet is required – has been delivered to more than 1,800 institutions since the program began in the late 1970s.



Using time in prison to one's advantage

But back to Harris. When he was sentenced to three years in prison, he was determined to make good use of the time.

"My wife and I made a strategy of how we were going to make this time work for us. I had never been able to return to school to finish a degree but wanted more education," he says. "So I researched to find a school that would give me something worthwhile and offer a chance to do it through correspondence."

Although Harris, like many others, had originally signed up for the monthly plan payment, an inheritance his wife received soon after his incarceration helped him pay off the cost of the course in one lump sum, which made things easier. If you pay on a monthly basis Blackstone only sends out the materials once it receives payment, but if the tuition is paid in full at the beginning, the books for the entire course are sent in the initial shipment.

Completing coursework

Of course it depends on the person and his or her background, but Harris said he only read five to 10 pages per day and developed a test strategy in which he went through the course work marking the answers to the practice questions. It took him a total of 24 months to complete the course, a bit more leisurely than he could have done it.

"I went through 16 books for the paralegal course. You could easily do one a month very comfortably," he says.

Making money in prison

Not only did he set himself up for a career once released, Harris also used the skills he gained to make money while incarcerated. He found that several fellow inmates, including himself, needed to file for bankruptcy, and he helped them do it, work which, he says, kept him really busy.

His selling proposition: "By being in there (in prison), I could get the Federal court to waive the filing fee. I would tell guys to give me \$200 and I'd get the \$335 filing fee waived."

The bankruptcy filing business even got him the support of prison employees.

"Prison officials were curious about what I was doing so they'd kind of peek in and say, "Hey what've you've goin' there," and I'd explain it. Most of the guards were in financial distress and would start asking me questions, and I'd refer them to online resources. Doing work for them would have created potential conflicts of interest, so I didn't go there, but through their curiosity they were supportive," he says.

What did the course mean for Harris while he was in prison?

It meant that it wasn't wasted time. While everyone else was counting the days, I was using the time to my advantage," he says. "It was also very instrumental in keeping my marriage together because in my absence my wife knew I was doing something that was going to benefit us all in the end."

Prison experience makes better paralegal

And what did it mean once he got out?

Harris had worked for a law firm before he went into prison but at a lower than paralegal level, so the Blackstone paralegal certificate gave him credibility to get a better job. Because he works in a firm that specializes partially in criminal law, Harris's prison experience gives him insight that others in his firm don't have.

"I'm able to connect with the client in a way that the attorney can't. I've been there and done that," Harris says. "When clients are in custody and I meet their families and I say I've been there, they say, "No you haven't." But when he finally convinces them that he has, they know he really understands their situation.

Advice for others

His advice for those still incarcerated:

- Structure your time and make it work for you.
- As felons we've been selling ourselves our whole lives. Most of us are quite the characters. Take that skillset and turn it into an asset instead of a hustle.
- Get engaged in your community and network through nonprofits. Put yourself out there and make yourself available to others and it's amazing what comes back when you do that.