Ethics & Paralegals
12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

The presenters will discuss ethics and professional responsibility, including an overview of ethics rules regarding licensed paraprofessional programs.

Beth Bialis RP®, NYSCP®
NFPA Director of Positions and Issues

Ms. Bialis earned her paralegal certificate in 1990 from the National Academy for Paralegal Studies, an ABA approved program and obtained her Registered Paralegal credential in 2012. Beth became a New York State Certified Paralegal in 2021. Beth has been a member of the Western New York Paralegal Association, Inc. (“WNYP”) since 1996. Throughout the years Beth served the members of WNYPA in various roles on the Board of Directors and in 2010 was elected to the NFPA Board of Directors serving three years as Region V Director and two years as Vice President and Director of Profession Development.

Beth also served as President of the Empire State Alliance of Paralegal Associations, Inc. for four years. During her tenure as President ESAPA developed and implemented the New York State Certified Paralegal program.

Beth has over fifteen years of experience as a litigation paralegal and is currently employed in the litigation department at Phillips Lytle LLP in Buffalo, New York.

Mitchell P. Snyder, Esq.
Mr. Snyder concentrates his practice in the areas of commercial litigation, labor and employment law, energy law and government operations. Mr. Snyder earned his BA from Dickinson College and is JD from Penn State, Dickinson Law. Mr. Snyder served as the Managing Editor for Dickinson Law Review 2020-2022.

Break
1:00 – 1:15 PM ET
DEI: Embracing Diversity at Your Firm
1:15 – 2:15 PM ET

Many companies and law firms today state that they are committed to diversity and inclusion. But how does a company assess whether or not it is actually meeting that goal?

Hear about one firm’s commitment to develop and implement strategies to help cultivate diversity and inclusion including diversity goals, objectives, ongoing evaluation and accountability.

Attorney Linda Johnson is a Director with the law firm of McLane Middleton, Professional Association where she serves as Vice-Chair of the firm’s Education Law Group and chair emeritus of the firm’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. She is recognized as a national authority on student and campus safety issues, risk management, crisis response, employment law and independent school law issues.

Linda has also been named as a leading labor and employment law attorney by Business New Hampshire Magazine. She is AV rated by Martindale Hubbell which is the highest rating for legal ethics and services. Linda is the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the New Hampshire Women's Foundation. Linda was the first woman to ever serve as an officer of the NH Bar Association when she became the treasurer in 1988.

Among other awards, she has been selected as an Outstanding Business Woman of New Hampshire and part of the "New Hampshire 200," The Granite State's Most Influential Business Leaders by N.H. Business Review. Prior to going to law school, Linda worked as a paralegal in an insurance defense law firm for about 9 years and got her undergraduate degree in Paralegal Studies from Rivier University.

Break
2:15 – 2:30 PM ET

Regulation Trends
2:30 – 3:30 PM ET

This session will cover updates & trends in the paralegal profession across the country. It is presented by Beth Bialis RP®, NYSCP®.

Break
3:30 – 3:45 PM ET

Roundtable: Regulation Updates from Oregon & North Carolina
3:45 – 4:45 PM ET

Hear from regulation leaders from Oregon and North Carolina during this Roundtable session.
Oregon will share more about their licensed paralegal program, the history of regulation/certification in the state, statistics on the Access to Justice gap in the state and the status of the plan approved by Oregon’s Supreme Court and the Oregon State Bar Board of Governors set to roll out July 1, 2023, and the current status of supporting bills in the Oregon house and senate.

North Carolina will cover their state’s background on regulation/certification, the NCCP program, Equal Access to Justice in the state, and the most recent development of the NC JFAP legislative proposal.

Linda Odermott, RP®, OCP is a paralegal with experience in government, civilian and corporate paralegal positions over the course of her sixteen-year career. Her skills and expertise are nationally recognized, having been a frequent panelist, facilitator and speaker on both the local and national stage, discussing ethics, paralegal credentialing, regulation, military paralegals transition to civilian roles, and more recently on the changing professional landscape focusing on the evolving paralegal licensure and sandbox programs sprouting up across the U.S. and Canada.

In addition to her full-time paralegal position for a Fortune 100 company, Linda is also an instructor on the adjunct faculty team at Portland Community College’s Paralegal Program. She teaches courses in both Real Property and the Paralegal Capstone. Linda is also currently serving as a member of the Oregon State Bar Paraprofessional Licensing Implementation Committee (PLIC), where she chairs the Admissions and Education Workgroup. The PLIC was charged with drafting the implementation rules for the licensed paralegal program, designed to help bridge the state’s access to justice gap faced by Oregon’s underrepresented and underserved populations.

Alicia Mitchell-Mercer is the Director of Project Management at Lex Project Management Consulting Group and is a dedicated Project Manager for a law firm in Charlotte, North Carolina. Mitchell-Mercer is also an active FINRA Securities Arbitrator.

She has received numerous accolades for her work in the legal community, including the NC Judicial Branch Service Award (two-time recipient) and the North Carolina Bar Association’s 2021 Distinguished Paralegal Award. She has been an active member of the legal community, including the NCBA Internet and Regulations Task Force and the NCBA Paralegal Division, as a former Council Member and Chair of the Communications and Publications committees. Currently, she Chairs the NCBA Paralegal Division’s Technology and Utilization Committees. Additionally, she served on the 2021-2022 NALA Board of Directors and Chaired NALA’s Continuing Education Council. Mitchell-Mercer was also a member of the former North Carolina State Bar Subcommittee Studying Regulatory Change (2021-2022).

Mitchell-Mercer is working on her doctoral dissertation in public policy and administration and
increasing access to justice in North Carolina through the organization she Co-Founded, the North Carolina Justice for All Project (www.ncjfap.org). In 2023 she was appointed as a Special Advisor to the NC Equal Access to Justice Commission by Justice Richard Dietz.

Rachel Royal, CP, NCCP, graduated with honors from Carteret Community College in 2017, as the Paralegal Graduate of the Year. She has been in leadership with the North Carolina Bar Association Paralegal Division since 2018, including co-chairing the Division's Pro Bono Committee. Rachel has worked in family law, insurance defense, and municipal law and has been owner of Royal Touch Project Solutions as a freelance paralegal and project management consultant since 2020. She was a contract consultant for the NC Equal Access to Justice Commission for two years as project coordinator for the Driver’s License Restoration and Housing Stability Projects.

At the beginning of 2023, Rachel began working with the Commission full-time as Finance and Project Manager and is currently managing multiple projects, including the Wake County Legal Support Center. Rachel has volunteered for Legal Aid of North Carolina, the NC Pro Bono Resource Center (PBRC), NCAJ High School Mock Trial NC Bar Foundation, Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, and many other pro bono projects.