



Feature

Legal Transcriptionist

What is Legal Transcription?

Learning about legal transcription is a fun challenge, and can be applied throughout a person's life, as law impacts us every day. With possibility of becoming a well-paying career, transcription requires specialized expertise which can be utilized across a broadening range of career choice. Virtually everything that takes place in the civil and criminal court systems requires hard copy documentation. The information is either dictated or recorded in the courtroom or at deposition hearings, as well as in law offices in less official settings. It may include testimony, pleadings, interrogatories (questions and answers), reviews of administrative hearings and the like. Generally, the information is recorded either onto tape or digital voice processing systems. It includes the process of transferring information from recorded dictation to hard documentation using transcribers and computer word processors. Legal assistants, legal transcriptionists, and paralegals, prepare legal documents both from written and dictated information. In addition, other typical duties may include drafting and filing legal documents, calendaring and tracking important deadlines, assisting attorneys to prepare for trials, documenting relevant facts and information pertaining to a lawsuit, organizing and maintenance of client files, and using computers and related software as well as other reference materials to research and document law, and to prepare or transcribe the documents involved. Legal assistants, secretaries, and transcriptionists may become so proficient that they can actually undertake paralegal duties as well. Transcription jobs are available on in the Internet and you can do it at home.

Skills

To be a legal transcriptionist one must be certified. Online classes are available across the internet to assist individuals in obtaining certification. In these classes one gains a good working knowledge of the legal system, how to research legal websites, review state court cases and format documents. General information regarding the profession of law is obtained. Vocational training allows a person to find work in a law office, or legal department of business, or on the World Wide Web. One must know about the law, various court systems and their venues, the formats for legal documents in your state, how to research case law and cite it. It helps enormously to have excellent typing skills, as well as the ability to learn quickly and retain information. Proficiency in spelling is also a bonus.

Convenience

One of the reasons legal transcription is so popular is because one may carry it out from their own home! This means no daycare, no long commute, no expensive office wardrobe, and no hassle. Freelance Legal Transcriptionists operate on their own time, setting their own hours, providing services to lawyers on a contractual basis. A freelance legal

transcriptionist works under the supervision of an attorney, who assumes responsibility for the legal transcriptionist's work product. The attorney or another member of the staff dictates or edits previously prepared files, which the transcriptionist then transcribes or provides the edited work product. Most often transcriptionists are merely required to have on hand a good English dictionary, as well as a legal dictionary. Obviously, if working from home, one must have a computer accessible. A plus and a minus, depending on how one looks at it, the earning potential is entirely in the hands of the transcriptionist.

Demand

From major corporations to single attorneys, demand is growing for legal transcriptionists at an alarming rate. Not only in the law profession are transcriptions needed, but in government agencies, federal government, administrative agencies, insurance companies, and financial institutions. Usually, the earnings are based upon completed lines typed, especially in contracted internet work. For example, one might get paid anywhere from six-nine cents a line. This ends up as \$1.50 to \$3 for a page. Once a person has some experience under their belt, they could be typing up to 300 lines per hour. Multiply 300 by seven and it equals \$21 an hour. In reality,



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the average is more around \$9 to \$12 an hour. If working in an office, the salary can range anywhere from \$27,000 to \$40,000 annually. In Los Angeles the average salary for

legal transcriptionist jobs is \$35,000, while in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania the average is \$40,000.

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