



THE FLORIDA BAR

Results of the 2011 Survey of Florida Registered Paralegals

April 2011

BACKGROUND

As part of the evaluation that is required for all Florida Bar programs after their initial three years, the Program Evaluation Committee of The Florida Bar Board of Governors initiated a thorough review of the Florida Registered Paralegal program during the 2010-11 Bar year. The primary purpose for these types of evaluations is to review the program's charter, mission, goals and objectives, and then conduct performance measurements to assure that the program is fulfilling its objectives and functioning in the most efficient and effective manner.

As an important facet of this particular evaluation, the Program Evaluation Committee wanted to learn more about the level of satisfaction that FRP members are having with the program, as members who utilize the various program services and benefits are a great resource to provide feedback on what is currently working effectively, what might need some improvement, and what additional items or benefits should be added in the future.

At its January 27, 2011 meeting in Tallahassee, the Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) unanimously approved a request that The Florida Bar immediately undertake a survey of Florida Registered Paralegals. A questionnaire was drafted for the approval of the PEC Subcommittee handling the evaluation and, after their review and approval, the questionnaire was made available to the full sample of Florida Registered Paralegals with email addresses on file with The Florida Bar.

On February 28, 2011, The Florida Bar's Department of Research, Planning & Evaluation emailed a link to an online survey to 4,028 Florida Registered Paralegals. By the cut-off date on March 9, 2011 the Bar had received 1,995 completed questionnaires, for an excellent response rate of 50%.

Using a statistical analysis computer program entitled SPSS, The Florida Bar's Department of Research, Planning & Evaluation coded and entered all completed surveys, verified data for accuracy and completeness, and applied the appropriate statistical tests to the data.

SAMPLE

For this survey of Florida Registered Paralegals, the error of estimation rate is approximately plus or minus 2 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence. This signifies that we can be 95 percent sure that, if all Florida Registered Paralegals were interviewed, the results would be within plus or minus 2 percent of what this sample found. If, for example, a question achieved a percentage breakdown of 75 percent in favor, it can be interpreted that between 73 and 77 percent of Florida Registered Paralegals are in favor.

In reporting the results, all percentages were rounded to the nearest whole percent (example: 74.5% equals 75%). For this reason, totals may not all equal 100 percent. Note that several questions are "multiple response questions." This means that respondents were encouraged to check all responses which apply to a given situation. Thus, multiple response questions will not total 100 percent.

Results of The Florida Bar's Survey of Florida Registered Paralegals

1. How long have you been a Florida Registered Paralegal?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than one year	31
One year	10
Two years	15
More than two years	44

- * Nearly three-fifths (59%) of all respondents have been a Florida Registered Paralegal for two years or longer. Just under one-third (31%) have been a Florida Registered Paralegal for less than one year.

2. How much value do you think that Florida Registered Paralegal membership adds to your professional development?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A great deal	55
Some	33
A little	9
None	3

- * 88% of respondents report that FRP membership adds a great deal (55%) or some value (33%) to their professional development. Only 12% believe it adds little (9%) or no value (3%).

3. How does the cost of Florida Registered Paralegal membership compare with the value that you derive from it?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
More value than one would expect for the money	5
A lot of value for the money	29
Some value for the money	40
A little value for the money	14
Not enough value for the money	12

- * Two-fifths (40%) of all respondents report that FRP membership provides some value when compared to its cost, while over one-third (34%) report that it provides either a lot of value or more value than one would expect when compared to its cost.

4. How likely would you be to recommend Florida Registered Paralegal membership to a colleague?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very likely	60
Somewhat likely	25
Neither likely nor unlikely	10
Somewhat unlikely	2
Very unlikely	3

- * A large majority (85%) of respondents are likely to recommend FRP membership to a colleague, while only 5% report that they are unlikely to do so.

5. Please complete the following sentence: I became a Florida Registered Paralegal because...

A total of 1,793 respondents provided reasons as to why they sought Florida Registered Paralegal membership. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the five most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Wanted recognition/prestige	508
Enhance career/professional development	392
Employer required or employer paid for membership	205
Continued education	134
To benefit employer	100

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of the reasons listed by respondents for becoming a Florida Registered Paralegal, 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the five most frequently mentioned categories.

Wanted recognition/prestige

(508 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * I feel it is important for paralegals to be recognized for their education in this area, compared to others who are simply hired as a paralegal and classified as a paralegal without the education or experience.
- * I felt it was important to be recognized and it lends credibility to my profession.
- * I had been working as a paralegal for many years and wanted to take the opportunity to be recognized for it.
- * I have always held myself in high standard working in an attorney's office for 40 years, and now I feel as though I have the recognition.
- * I have been in the legal field for 30 years and because I do not have a degree in Paralegal Studies, this was a way for me to earn recognition in the legal field.
- * I have worked so many hours as a paralegal that I felt I deserved to be recognized as such.
- * I have worked very hard to get where I am and wanted to have some recognition for my efforts and experience in the field.
- * I thought it was a good recognition of the value that paralegals have.
- * I want my hard work and knowledge to be recognized.
- * I wanted acknowledgement for my achievements.
- * I wanted recognition by The Florida Bar for the education, training, and experience I had gained as a paralegal.
- * I wanted recognition within my field as being more than just your average paralegal.
- * I wanted the recognition and respect from colleagues that I studied as a paralegal and am not a secretary with little or no knowledge of legal aspects and practice.
- * I wanted the recognition of being registered with The Florida Bar.
- * I wanted to be recognized amongst my peers with having a certain degree of knowledge and experience, and to set myself apart from other professionals who call themselves "paralegals", but have no qualifications to back up their title.
- * I wanted to be recognized by the law firm I work for and in the community for the many years of hard work, dedication, skills and knowledge that I have accumulated.

- * I wanted to be recognized for my experience, skills, and achievements. FRP gives me all that and lets everyone know that I am recognized by The Florida Bar, the greatest recognition I can ask for. Thank you for having the program and I look forward to the program becoming a requirement for all paralegals.
- * I wanted to be recognized in the industry as a qualified paraprofessional and distinguished from those individuals who did not go through the same or similar types of education and training.
- * I wanted to get the recognition we deserve, for the hard work and dedication that we put into our careers as paralegals. It gives us the credibility amongst our peers, as being more than just an assistant in an office setting. We are valuable to the community and to our attorneys that we work for day in and day out.
- * The recognition by The Florida Bar as a registered paralegal provides a reference point for clients and professionals in the legal community as to who I am and what my credentials are (i.e. requirements for becoming a FRP).

Enhance career/professional development

(392 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Because I thought it would be beneficial to my career and my future as a paralegal.
- * I am confident that it will impact employability as a paralegal in Florida in the future.
- * I believe that in today's market you need it in order to be competitive.
- * I believe that it will impact my ability to obtain employment in the future.
- * I believed it would be a significant addition to my credentials. I wished to further my career.
- * I feel it will help advance my career and open up new opportunities for employment.
- * I felt it would enhance and benefit my current position and whatever position I may hold in the future.
- * I felt it would enhance my career and my marketability as attorneys and clients recognize The Florida Bar as a respectable organization whereas associations such as NALA are not necessarily known or trusted. It also lends credibility to my qualifications.
- * I felt that it would enhance my opportunities and broaden my range when seeking employment.
- * I thought it might enhance my employment resumé.

- * I thought it would give me an edge if I ever had to get back into the job market.
- * I thought it would open employment doors.
- * I thought that being registered would be an advantage in getting a job or it would provide me with a better salary versus not being registered.
- * I wanted it to look good on my resumé for a future job.
- * I wanted to further my career and become more marketable.
- * I wanted to improve my resumé.
- * It appeared to be necessary to continue working and moving up as a paralegal.
- * It was made available and I thought it would be a benefit to my professional career.
- * It was the next step to take in my career.
- * To enhance my career and qualifications.
- * While my current job did not require that I become certified, I thought it a wise career choice for possible future employment.

Employer required or employer paid for membership

(205 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * A law firm I work for told me to do so and paid for it; I would not have done so otherwise.
- * I was asked to register by my employer.
- * I was hired by a new law firm that requested I apply.
- * It was a requirement of my law firm and the grandfathering provisions were lapsing this year.
- * It was recommended by the partners in the law firm where I am employed that I become registered.
- * Management required it.
- * More law firms require that their paralegals are FRP.
- * My employer recommended I do it and my employer paid the registration fee.

- * My employer was willing to pay for it.
- * My firm encourages membership in professional organizations.
- * My firm required it, however, I probably would have pursued it on my own whether or not my firm required it.
- * My firm was asking that we become registered if we met the requirements.
- * My firm was willing to pay for me to become one.
- * My previous firm wanted its paralegals to have this designation.
- * My supervising attorney requested it of me.
- * Our law firm now requires all billable paralegals to be Florida Registered Paralegals.
- * The firm I am working for is now requiring all paralegals to become registered.
- * The firm I worked for requested it due to vendor requests for a registered paralegal to work on their files.
- * The large law firm I work for encourages membership for all of the paralegals.
- * We were required by the firm that I work for.

Continued education

(134 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * I became a Florida Registered Paralegal because I value the educational training and ethics that I am required to uphold.
- * I believe it brings a heightened awareness of the need to continue your education in order to do the best job that you can for your employer and your client at all times.
- * I believe it is important to maintain our continuing education as a profession. Employers are more likely to encourage CLE's if they are to maintain your FRP status.
- * I continuously through the years work on enhancing my education through CLE courses and other methods of education.
- * I felt it would enhance my knowledge through ongoing education, and in receiving and reading articles from The Florida Bar. Clients may feel more confidence in the firm's legal staff by knowing they are registered with the state and are receiving an ongoing education.

- * I strongly believe in continuing legal education and like the fact that it is required.
- * I think it is important to recognize the paralegals that do continue their education in on-the-job training, seminars or classes.
- * I thought it was extremely important to keep up on my continuing education which benefits both my employer and me.
- * I wanted the additional education by completing continuing education requirements.
- * I wanted to belong to an organization that held weight in the legal community and that would provide me with continuing education possibilities.
- * I wanted to better myself and learn more through the continuing education requirements.
- * I wanted to continue my education in my field.
- * I wanted to expand my opportunities in furthering my knowledge through continuing education.
- * I wanted to have the opportunity to gain legal education through other avenues.
- * I wanted to take advantage of the continuing legal programs that were offered to attorneys.
- * I would like to expand my knowledge in my field through continuing education offered.
- * It is important to stay abreast of the current laws and this provides me an added incentive to take the appropriate courses and obtain the CLE credits related thereto.
- * It provides me with, not only required continuing education, but also educational opportunities within my area of law, which is far more valuable than just the CLE hours!
- * Of the education I receive from the meetings, luncheons, dinners, and various speakers at these functions.
- * The requirements for continuing education will encourage me to continue working to be the best paralegal I can be.

To benefit employer

(100 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * I appreciated the prestige that it would add to the law firm I am employed by.
- * I believe it enhances the profile of my law firm.

- * I enjoy my job and I feel that becoming a registered paralegal not only benefits me, it benefits my employer.
- * I felt it gave greater recognition and confidence of the public and our clients in our firm.
- * I thought it would "make the firm I work for look better" and would give me additional information to make me more knowledgeable in my position.
- * I thought it would be beneficial for the law firm I work for.
- * I thought it would make me a more valuable employee to my firm, and benefit my firm as well as myself.
- * I thought the title would be a benefit to my employer.
- * I wanted to benefit my firm.
- * I wanted to be an asset to my firm and it was a personal accomplishment for me, both now and in the future.
- * It adds an amount of status to the firm.
- * It allowed my attorneys to bill for my time, thus making me a more valuable member of the firm.
- * It helped my employer to show me as more qualified to do the work that I do.
- * It increases the value of our firm's resumé.
- * It may be helpful to my law firm.
- * It will be beneficial to my employer.
- * My firm wanted me to achieve the designation so that it would help with collecting my fees from insurance carriers and the courts.
- * Of the value to my firm and potential clients.
- * The qualification increases my firm's ability to recover paralegal expenses in a) time billing; and b) court-ordered prevailing-party attorneys fees, thus increasing my value to the firm.
- * To benefit my firm as far as outside relations.

6. Please complete the following sentence: If I renew my Florida Registered Paralegal membership next year, it will be because...

A total of 1,753 respondents provided reasons as to why they might renew their Florida Registered Paralegal membership next year. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the six most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Maintain status/designation	395
Employer pays or requires	250
I enjoy/like/value the program	203
For recognition/prestige/accomplishment	184
To advance career/future employment	153
Education/CLE	140

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of the reasons listed by respondents for possibly renewing their Florida Registered Paralegal membership next year, 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the six most frequently mentioned categories.

Maintain status/designation

(395 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * I am still an active paralegal and the designation must remain active.
- * I do not want to lose the recognition of being a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * I have to maintain my status in order to keep my title.
- * I think it is very important to maintain this credential.
- * I want to continue as a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * I want to continue belonging to this organization.
- * I want to continue having this status of Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * I want to continue holding the title as a FRP.
- * I want to continue in the legal field.
- * I want to continue, with pride, being noticed as a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * I want to keep it.

- * I want to keep the title I worked so hard for.
- * I want to maintain what I have obtained due to years of hard work and experience.
- * I wish to continue my training and to achieve higher goals.
- * I would like to continue being a member of your organization.
- * I would like to maintain membership status.
- * My commitment to maintaining my position.
- * To keep my status current and not to drop my title.
- * To maintain membership. I have found it to be worthwhile and an asset to me in the present and for my future.
- * To maintain this status.

Employer pays or requires

(250 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * An employer in the future may require it.
- * I am one of the fortunate paralegals whose law firm pays for their renewal fee.
- * I am required to by my employer.
- * I am subject to my employer's requirement to be registered.
- * If I renew my Florida Registered Paralegal membership next year, it will be because my employer will most likely require it.
- * It is a requirement of employment and, therefore, I do not pay any fees associated with the renewal.
- * It is a requirement of my law firm. However, as a result of the benefits derived from the membership I would renew even if it weren't a requirement.
- * It is now a requirement of my employment.
- * It is required for my position.
- * It will continue to be a requirement at our law firm and I appreciate the opportunity to be viewed on a more professional level in the legal community.

- * I work at a firm that values this title and encourages all eligible for the FRP status to renew and maintain an active status.
- * My employer pays for it and wants it.
- * My employer pays for it.
- * My employer requires it/pays for it.
- * My law firm asked that I maintain the designation and I believe it is important to distinguish paralegals from office staff.
- * My law firm pays for it.
- * Our law office supports and requires the FRP designation.
- * Requirement of the firm I work for.
- * The law firm I work for has requested it.
- * The law firm I work for wants all of its paralegals to be registered paralegals.

I enjoy/like/value the program

(203 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Because I am proud to be a paralegal member of The Florida Bar.
- * I am very happy and satisfied with the program that The Florida Bar has offered to paralegals.
- * I believe in the program.
- * I enjoy being a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * I enjoy being a FRP member.
- * I enjoy being part of the FRP program. I have met many people and developed new friends.
- * I enjoy it and pledge my continued support for the program.
- * I feel that becoming a Florida Registered Paralegal has been extremely beneficial.
- * I found it to be beneficial.
- * I have enjoyed being a Florida Registered Paralegal.

- * I have enjoyed it immensely and plan to become more involved.
- * I have enjoyed it this past year.
- * I have thoroughly enjoyed the benefits provided by the association with The Florida Bar.
- * I value and enjoy it.
- * I value my membership.
- * I value the professional status and like being a member of The Florida Bar.
- * I would like to see the FRP program succeed and even surpass its first three years. I am a strong supporter of this program.
- * I'm very proud to be a part of The Florida Bar Registered Paralegal program.
- * It is an extremely important element of my profession. It is comparable to an attorney being bar certified in a particular field of practice.
- * It's a good thing.

For recognition/prestige/accomplishment

(184 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * I deserve to have this and be recognized as a professional. Everyone I have met so far thinks and says it's awesome to have.
- * I enjoy the prestige of being a professional.
- * I feel that it acknowledges all my years of service as a paralegal.
- * I have worked in the profession for years and renewing my membership allows for me to become recognized in the community and with other paralegals. Now that I am in law school, I will continue to renew until the day I walk across the stage and get my J.D. I will encourage all paralegals to become registered.
- * I hope to gain more prestige with doing so.
- * I like having the acknowledgement of being recognized by the State of Florida.
- * I like the prestige of having the title FRP as part of my title. I think it makes a difference in the way that others look at me.
- * I value being recognized for my abilities.

- * I want people to know that I have achieved a certain status through education and work experience and have earned the title of Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * I want the additional "prestige" and recognition as a professional.
- * I want to continue to be registered by the State of Florida in my chosen field as it officially recognizes and gives credibility to my paralegal abilities.
- * I will continue to receive the recognition that I deserve from the law firm that I work for and from the community.
- * I wish to continue having the professional recognition of my colleagues and the attorneys with whom I come into contact.
- * I would like to continue enjoying the recognition I get by using my title after my name and displaying my certificate, which I am very proud of.
- * It gives the position more prestige and recognition.
- * It is a prestigious and recognizable title.
- * It is nice to be recognized and rewarded for your dedication to your job and chosen field of work.
- * It shows our clients that my expertise is recognized by The Florida Bar.
- * Members of my profession have worked tirelessly to promote the professional status that FRP's enjoy under this program and I believe that employers and Court systems are beginning to value paralegals holding such designations.
- * The title provides recognition of my many years of hard work, acquired knowledge, and dedication to the attorney I work with.

To advance career/future employment

- * Credentials. The title looks great on my resumé.
- * I am currently employed by a state agency and although I do not currently plan to leave my state employment, should I do so at some point in the future, the Florida Registered Paralegal designation would prove beneficial for any future endeavors.
- * I am proud to be a member and I believe this membership enhances my ability to be marketable in the legal profession.
- * I believe it is a benefit to my career.

- * I believe it will help in my career development.
- * I feel it adds to my marketability should I seek other employment in the legal field.
- * I feel it enhances my professional career.
- * I feel it is important in my career.
- * I feel it would give me an edge if I change jobs.
- * I think it's beneficial to my career.
- * I want to continue to keep the title of paralegal and because it helps to have it if I want to further my career at a different law firm.
- * I wish to maintain my marketability.
- * I would like to continue to have this on my resumé.
- * If I change firms, I will want to put on my resumé that I am a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * It adds value to my resumé.
- * It continues to give me a competitive advantage in my field.
- * It has assisted me in obtaining my current position and I believe the designation as a FRP will continue to assist me in my employment endeavors.
- * It might improve job marketability.
- * It opens many doors.
- * Should I make a career move in the future, I would hope it would have an impact on my resumé.
- * The credentials are of great value.

Education/CLE

(140 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Because of the continuing education seminars held at luncheons and events.
- * Being a Florida Registered Paralegal has provided me with credibility and has enabled me to continue my legal education. I feel that holding "registered paralegals"

accountable for their education and actions creates a greater sense of responsibility and professionalism.

- * I am committed to the legal field and want to further my education.
- * I enjoy attending continuing education and Florida Bar seminars.
- * I enjoy being a registered paralegal and attending continuing legal education seminars to stay fresh and up to date.
- * I enjoy the legal education and keeping up with the changes in the law.
- * I feel that being a FRP and attending CLE meetings has increased my education and knowledge to help me accomplish my work.
- * I have completed the educational component and grown as a professional.
- * I learn a lot with all the CLE requirements.
- * I like the CLE requirement - it gives me the opportunity to update my knowledge.
- * I recognize and appreciate the value of receiving the on-going continuing education requirements.
- * I value the opportunities and education provided by the program.
- * I want the opportunity to gain continuing legal education.
- * I want to continue my education opportunities.
- * I want to keep the title of Florida Registered Paralegal and continue my legal education to be current with any new developments.
- * I want to learn as much as possible to enhance my skills as a paralegal. I see the CLE requirement as a way to motivate me to take classes and continue learning.
- * I will be continuing my legal education and fulfilling requirements.
- * I wish to continue being an FRP and I enjoy the CLE classes offered by the Bar.
- * I would like to continue to be a member and participate in the CLE courses in order to broaden my legal knowledge.
- * To continue educational needs.
- * To continue legal education.

7. What do you like or value most about your Florida Registered Paralegal membership?

(1,552 responses received)

A total of 1,552 respondents reported what they like or value most about Florida Registered Paralegal membership. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the six most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Provides credibility/value/status/recognition	448
CLE classes/requirement/standards	207
Benefits (i.e. Bar <i>News</i>) received from being a member	172
Being able to use the title or name designation “FRP”	118
Having access to Florida Bar information	80
Oversight/affiliation with The Florida Bar	79

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of what respondents like or value most about their Florida Registered Paralegal membership, 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the six most frequently mentioned categories.

Provides credibility/value/status/recognition

(448 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Ability to be recognized for achievement and dedication to the field.
- * Being recognized as a professional.
- * Having recognition for all the years of hard work.
- * Honestly, the recognition. That someone examined your credentials and said you were recognized as a paralegal by the Supreme Court of Florida.
- * I feel it gives me recognition for being in this profession for more than 20 years.
- * I value the recognition gained for all of my hard work over the last 15 years.
- * It provides recognition and credibility.
- * It shows recognition of paralegals by The Florida Bar and makes paralegals realize the value of membership.
- * Membership has enhanced my credibility with my supervisors and other employees.

- * Official recognition from attorneys collectively (through the Bar) that paralegals do have value-adding roles in the law field.
- * The ability to be recognized for my experience and talents.
- * The acknowledgment of my achievements.
- * The credibility it adds.
- * The fact that it does allow for recognition of educated and trained paralegals.
- * The recognition of attaining the requirements to be registered.
- * The recognition from my peers.
- * The recognition. Attorneys tend to treat you differently when they see the FRP designation after your name than if it was not there.
- * The respect I get when someone asks me what the letters "FRP" mean and I explain how this designation came to be...by hard work and dedication to my profession.
- * The sense of credibility and professionalism it affords me within my company and the legal community.
- * To be recognized by The Florida Bar that I have met the standards set by this program to call myself a true paralegal.

CLE classes/requirement/standards

(207 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Ability to take CLE's otherwise not offered to paralegals through The Florida Bar.
- * Access to a wide variety of continuing education.
- * Being able to attend educational seminars in my field.
- * Continuing education requirements.
- * Enables me to attend CLE programs with expenses covered by my firm.
- * I have always been one to value education and feel life-long learning is important; I believe the educational requirements are good for the legal industry as a whole.
- * Interesting CLE's.

- * It gives me the chance to go further with the CLE's and gain insightful knowledge that carries over into my area that I work in, which makes me more valuable to the firm and community.
- * It motivates me to continue my education in the legal field.
- * It provides me with access to a lot of good educational materials.
- * It requires continuing education.
- * It requires me to get continuing legal education which I feel is very important.
- * Requirement for additional education through CLE classes.
- * So far I what I like most is the access to CLE courses that I would not have had knowledge of in the past.
- * That I am required to complete a certain number of hours of continuing education.
- * The CLE requirements and programs now available to us as paralegals.
- * The continuing education credit courses required assist in keeping me up to date and informed on the tasks required in my position on a daily basis.
- * The continuing legal education aspect.
- * The emphasis on continued education.
- * The requirement for continued education.

Benefits (i.e. Bar News) received from being a member

(172 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Access to insurance benefits.
- * Being a member and the ability to utilize the benefits associated with membership.
- * Enjoying the same perks and benefits as an attorney.
- * I appreciate the same benefits being offered to me as any other member of The Florida Bar.
- * I enjoy having all of the benefits that are available to attorneys through The Florida Bar, including the Bar News.
- * I enjoy the member benefits provided through the Bar.

- * I like knowing that I have access to the services provided by The Florida Bar.
- * It entitles me to certain benefits that unregistered paralegals do not have. It also moves me into a different pay scale from unregistered paralegals. I value what it makes available to me through being a member - such as the dental and eye insurance.
- * Receiving the membership benefits such as the monthly newsletter, CLE seminars etc.
- * Same benefits like the attorneys.
- * The Florida Bar member benefits, such as dental insurance and receipt of The Florida Bar *News*.
- * The benefits available to me because of the membership.
- * The benefits of being a Florida Bar Member.
- * The benefits that come along with it.
- * The benefits that come with it.
- * The benefits that The Florida Bar provides to us FRP's.
- * The benefits we receive as professionals of the legal field.
- * The benefits which have been available only to attorneys through The Florida Bar.
- * The benefits which have been provided to us.
- * The Florida Bar benefits that are provided to FRP members.

Being able to use the title or name designation "FRP"

(118 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * A title to go with my hard work.
- * Adds a distinction to title.
- * Being able to call myself a registered paralegal.
- * Being able to say that I am a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * Being able to write "Florida Registered Paralegal" after my name, especially to attorneys outside of Florida. I think they have more confidence in correspondence coming from me than they would if it was signed "Legal Assistant" or just "Paralegal."

- * Credentials!
- * Having the title.
- * Having the title of being a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * I value the designation.
- * It is a very good feeling to have that title after my name.
- * The ability to use the designation of a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * The designation FRP symbolizes that I am educated, dedicated, and interested in continuing my education to retain my designation and membership.
- * The fact that I can call myself a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * The FRP at the end of my name when I sign a letter.
- * The prestige of the words following my name.
- * The prestige that comes from being associated with The Florida Bar and carrying the title of a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * The title and experience required for the title.
- * The title designation.
- * Using the title.
- * Using the FRP status.

Having access to Florida Bar information

(80 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Access to a fountain of information.
- * Access to information found on The Florida Bar website.
- * Access to information, seminars, news, and updates.
- * Being a member of The Florida Bar and receiving communication, such as CLE information.
- * E-mails, newsletters, and website are very informative.

- * I am included in Bar events and receive Florida Bar updates and news.
- * I like getting e-mails and publications about news events relating to the Court system, judges, other law firms, and legislative initiatives. Despite being in a law office on a daily basis, I really never realized before how much information I was missing out on. It feels good to be in the loop and to have timely access to what's happening and what's being proposed.
- * I like the amount of information and opportunities to learn more about the profession that is gathered and distributed to members. I value the content that the FRP program provides to members.
- * I like the fact that I receive the monthly newsletter and emails from The Florida Bar regarding services for members.
- * I like the inclusion of the member information for FRPs on The Florida Bar website.
- * I like the information available to me regarding current issues regarding the regulation and licensing/certification of paralegals, as well as information about CLE opportunities. I also like the new feature added to The Florida Bar website that allows you to search for FRP's.
- * I like the information that we received from The Florida Bar.
- * I receive information and opportunities that I would, otherwise, not receive.
- * I value the wealth of information that is being emailed to me.
- * Information supplied to me often regarding current and relevant matters.
- * Regarding FRP membership, I most like or value being included on The Florida Bar's emailing list and getting The Florida Bar *News*. Also, being able to access the Bar website online as a Bar member would.
- * The constant update of the legal profession; whether it is attorney/paralegal information or legal matters.
- * The informative emails.
- * The membership affords me tons of information.
- * The updates as to continuing education, requirements, etc. regarding The Florida Bar Registered Paralegal program.

Oversight/affiliation with The Florida Bar

(79 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Association with The Florida Bar as a professional in the field.
- * At this point, I like the association with The Florida Bar. I am hopeful that as we move forward, and the grandfathering time expires, being an FRP member will hold more significance in the legal community.
- * Because I feel that I am part of The Florida Bar.
- * Being a part of The Florida Bar.
- * Being affiliated with The Florida Bar.
- * Florida Bar backing.
- * I am proud to be associated with The Florida Bar.
- * I like being able to say I am affiliated with The Florida Bar. It adds something extra to my job title of great significance.
- * I like that the program is associated with The Florida Bar.
- * I like the fact that we are part of The Florida Bar.
- * I value being designated as a paraprofessional by The Florida Bar.
- * It is through The Florida Bar, like the attorney we work for.
- * Its affiliation with The Florida Bar.
- * Membership with The Florida Bar.
- * Membership to The Florida Bar makes the profession more reputable.
- * That is goes through The Florida Bar. That holds more weight with attorneys than other certification associations.
- * That it is affiliated with The Florida Bar.
- * The designation is from The Florida Bar.
- * The support from The Florida Bar.
- * To be certified thru The Florida Bar.

8. What do you dislike most, or value least, about your Florida Registered Paralegal membership?

(1,485 responses received)

A total of 1,485 respondents reported what they dislike most, or value least, about Florida Registered Paralegal membership. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the four most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Nothing/no dislikes	532
Cost of CLE/membership	273
Not enough CLE seminars/opportunities	132
Amount of CLE that is required/the ability to meet the requirement	109

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of what respondents dislike most, or value least, about their Florida Registered Paralegal membership, 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the four most frequently mentioned categories.

Nothing/no dislikes

(532 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * At the present time nothing.
- * Can't think of anything at all.
- * Can't think of anything negative.
- * I am unable to describe any dislike I have at the current time.
- * I am unable to think of one reason that I do not value the membership for.
- * I do not dislike anything at all about the membership.
- * I do not dislike or value least anything about my FRP membership.
- * I have not come across anything yet to dislike.
- * I have not found anything of significance that I dislike about the FRP membership yet.
- * I have not incurred anything that I dislike.
- * I think all the benefits are worthwhile.

- * I value everything thus far about the Florida Registered Paralegal membership.
- * No dislikes.
- * Nothing I can think of.
- * Nothing so far - it has been great!
- * Nothing. I like everything about the FRP status.
- * Nothing. I just posted my FRP credits this morning and it was very easy and the website was very user friendly.
- * Obtaining this certificate has only brought positive results.
- * There is no downside that I can think of.
- * There is nothing that I dislike, or value least about my membership.

Cost of CLE/membership

(273 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Although continuing legal education is extremely important, it is somewhat expensive.
- * Cost is high when you are required to personally pay for your membership (which I do).
- * I believe that the cost of the membership is a little high.
- * I do feel that the annual cost of membership is excessive in these economic times. If The Florida Bar could reduce the costs (even if only by a little), it would certainly help many paralegals like myself who pay for the membership out of our own pockets, without law firm assistance. We pay for continuing education seminars in addition to the membership fee to continue to be eligible for membership. Please consider these expenses when reviewing the budget for this program.
- * I get nothing for the cost of membership. The CLE seminars provided through the Bar do not provide a discount for paralegal members. We are expected to pay the same price as the attorneys and my firm does not pay for my seminars.
- * I want to learn more, but many of the courses are not price structured for a paralegal's salary range.
- * I wish it wasn't so expensive to maintain. The classes seem expensive.
- * In this economy, it is very hard to afford the fees for the memberships and the continuing education.

- * Many of the CLE courses are priced for attorneys. My firm does not pay for CLE courses and it is difficult to find courses I can afford on my salary.
- * The cost - it is nearly two days of my salary, and I am the sole support for my family of three.
- * The cost and that we have to pay for CLE.
- * The cost for the classes to obtain the CLE credits. I wish that there were more free options and/or lower cost.
- * The cost is a little high, especially for those of us that must pay for it ourselves.
- * The costs associated with the CLE conferences. My law firm does not assist me in payment of same.
- * The downside is the cost of membership, along with the added costs of the workshops, seminars and CLE credit courses.
- * The expense of the dues and CLE.
- * The Florida Bar offers no discounts on CLE even though a paralegal traditionally earns a small percentage compared to an attorney's salary.
- * The outrageous cost of \$150 per year. We are paralegals, not highly paid attorneys.
- * The yearly cost of \$150.00. If my firm did not pay for this fee, I personally would not be able to afford it.
- * What I don't like is the cost for the continued education. I don't know how long I will be able to keep my license as I don't know if I will be able to afford the classes. Also, the cost to renew your license is very high. I would like to see the cost cut in half.

Not enough CLE seminars/opportunities

(132 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * I dislike the fact that The Florida Bar refuses to offer any continuing education specifically for paralegals/FRP's.
- * I wish that there were more available seminars for CLE hours, especially in my practice group of Corporate and Securities.
- * I work a good amount of hours and having to make time for the CLE classes can be tough. I only take them for the credits, not because I get a lot out of the actual classes. I

have only taken, like one CLE that I found really useful. I know a lot of other paralegals feel the same way.

- * I would like to see CLE offered specifically for the paralegal through the Bar. I've found that the courses I've taken so far, while very informative and helpful, are geared toward lawyers and are not as beneficial for paralegals. Also, the locations of these courses are very limited -- it is too wasteful in both time and money for me to take time away from work to travel to the locations where they are offered. Our firm is specialized and there are not too many CLE's offered that apply to what our firm practices. I'm not going to waste time and money on a course in an area of law that we do not practice, so if possible, I'd like to see a few courses added specifically for civil litigation.
- * It has been most difficult to get CLE hours completed and I may lose my membership because of it.
- * It is difficult to attend seminars/programs because of my time constraints and the fact that my employer is not willing to permit day of the week programs, etc.
- * Lack of CLE opportunities geared towards paralegals.
- * Limited continuing education for paralegals.
- * Most of the events run into evening. It is difficult for those with kids to attend.
- * Not as many continuing legal education seminars as I would like to see in areas that are most beneficial to paralegals.
- * Not enough CLE courses offered (in my area at least).
- * Not enough educational opportunities (CLE programs) specifically for paralegals.
- * Not enough Florida Bar endorsed CLE seminars.
- * Not enough seminars for continuing education.
- * That I am not always able to take the courses to gain extra CLE credits when necessary. This is partly because it's hard for me to find care for my kids at some of the times that are proposed on some of the seminars.
- * The CLE courses I've seen aren't tailored for a paralegal.
- * The difficulty in finding affordable live CLE seminars within a reasonable distance of Pensacola, Florida. It is especially difficult to find seminars that do not take place during the work (billing) week. I am more than willing to attend a seminar on a Saturday rather than lose valuable billing time during the week.

- * There are no CLE programs offered exclusively for paralegals.
- * There are not enough CLE classes advertised to keep up with the requirements.
- * Unavailability of more intermediate level continuing legal education courses for paralegals.

Amount of CLE that is required/the ability to meet the requirement

(109 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * 30 hours of CLE requirement.
- * Finding time for the CLE credits.
- * Having the same CLE requirements as lawyers without having the resources for CLE credits as available to lawyers.
- * Having to complete the CLE hours. But, I have to admit, I do learn new things from the seminars.
- * Having to do as many CLE courses as the actual attorney.
- * Having to obtain the same amount of CLE's as attorneys.
- * I dislike that I am required to have 30 hours of continuing education. An attorney is required the same training as a FRP, however, paralegals do not make as much salary and if I am required to pay for the classes, it can cause a strain.
- * Meeting the large continuing education requirements.
- * So many CLE credits.
- * The 30 credits required.
- * The amount of CLE hours required.
- * The amount of CLE required hours.
- * The amount of CLE's you have to have.
- * The amount of continuing education required.
- * The fact that you have to meet the same CLE requirements that attorneys do is not fair. Our jobs do not pay nearly as much as the attorneys and our firms do not always pay for all of our CLE's. For some paralegals that may be going through financial hardship, this will be tough to comply with.

- * The requirement to accrue 30 hours of CLE credit. I have to make time to attend the seminars that are not held locally. I get more out of attending the seminars in person rather than taking them online and online seminars are too expensive.
- * Too many CEU's.
- * Too many CLE credits.
- * What I dislike the most is having to complete the 30 CLE hours because it becomes costly.
- * Working full time, it is difficult to get 30 hours of CLE.

9. How would you rate your awareness/knowledge of the benefits offered by The Florida Bar through your Florida Registered Paralegal membership?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Very aware	21
Somewhat aware	51
Not very aware	22
Not aware at all	6

- * Just over half (51%) of respondents are somewhat aware of the benefits offered by The Florida Bar through Florida Registered Paralegal membership, while over one-quarter (28%) are either not very aware or have no awareness at all of the benefits offered.

10. Please indicate how often you use the following Florida Bar benefits that are provided to Florida Registered Paralegal members:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Occasionally</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
Fastcase legal research	5	11	10	74
LexisNexis	5	10	8	77
ABA publication discounts	3	10	12	75
Federal Express/UPS shipping	4	6	8	82
Staples office supplies	3	7	8	82
Car rental/travel discounts	1	6	11	82
Apparel/clothier discounts	<1	4	10	85
Health/Disability/Life insur. Prog.	2	3	7	88
GEICO auto insurance	1	2	5	92

- * Fastcase, LexisNexis, and ABA publications are reported as the most frequently used benefits.

11. Please list any additional benefits that you would like to see offered by The Florida Bar to Florida Registered Paralegals:

(924 responses received)

A total of 924 respondents listed additional benefits they would like to see offered by The Florida Bar. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the four most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
None/can't think of any	173
More CLE opportunities	168
Awareness efforts regarding current benefits	111
Reduced rate/discounts of CLEs	109

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of what benefits FRP members would like to see offered in the future by The Florida Bar, 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the four most frequently mentioned categories.

None/can't think of any

(173 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Cannot think of anything.
- * Can't think of any.
- * Can't think of anything at all.
- * Can't think of anything for right now.
- * I am very satisfied with what is offered.
- * I love it the way it is.
- * I'm quite satisfied with the benefits that are currently offered.
- * It is fine as is.
- * None.
- * None are necessary at this time.
- * None at this time.
- * None for me.

- * None that I can think of.
- * None, at the moment.
- * None. So far, the benefits that are being offered are great.
- * Nothing at this time.
- * Nothing comes to mind.
- * Nothing I can think of at this time.
- * Nothing that I can think of right now.
- * There is nothing else I can think of. I believe the program is very well put together.

More CLE opportunities

(168 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Additional CLE's.
- * CLE courses/classes geared specifically towards the paralegal functions.
- * CLE programs.
- * CLE seminars geared toward the paralegal profession.
- * CLEs geared specifically for paralegals.
- * Discount on CLE programs for paralegals.
- * I would like to see more seminars geared towards paralegals that offer CLE credits at an affordable cost and are offered at different locations around the state.
- * I would like to see seminars offered specifically for paralegals.
- * More CLE approved and sponsored classes and deregulation of requirement that paralegals must work with an attorney and not independent of one.
- * More CLE offerings specifically for paralegals. More free CLE offerings.
- * More CLE programs geared towards professionals.
- * More CLE programs or courses helpful to paralegals today.

- * More CLE seminars.
- * More CLE seminars for paralegals.
- * More continuing education directly related to the functions of a paralegal.
- * More continuing education opportunities, please.
- * More live CLE seminars at affordable rates.
- * More opportunities for CLE's.
- * More seminars at reasonable prices.
- * Seminars geared towards paralegals.

Awareness efforts regarding current benefits

(111 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Did not know about some of the discounts listed above! I would like more information about them.
- * I did not even realize that the above benefits were offered or available.
- * I did not know that any of these benefits were offered. I had no idea that the above listed were actually benefits offered to the Florida Registered Paralegals.
- * I did not know that there are "retail" or "health care" items available until I received this survey.
- * I didn't know many of these benefits existed, but would like them to be better publicized so FRP's can take advantage of them.
- * I didn't know that these benefits also apply to FRP.
- * I didn't realize that I had the above benefits available to me. How do you access them?
- * I guess I have not been aware at all of any of these benefits, so as to an additional benefit, I would have to say being made aware of any and all benefits.
- * I have never used these benefits. I was not aware that paralegals were afforded these benefits and would like to know how I may utilize them.
- * I need to find out how to use these benefits, as I am not aware of them.

- * I was not aware of some of the discounts and would like an easier way to obtain information on the discounts.
- * I was not aware of the benefits above. I have a GEICO auto policy and would be interested to know what other benefits come from being a FRP.
- * I was not aware we had access to any or all of the above benefits.
- * I was not even aware of any "benefits" ... much less those enumerated above.
- * I was not even aware of the above benefits.
- * I was not even aware that any discounts were available.
- * I was unaware of the benefits.
- * I wasn't even aware of the ones listed above. I do plan to look into some of them.
- * I would like to get information on the benefits I currently have since I am not aware of the benefits at this time.
- * Wow, was not aware of all of these benefits.

Reduced rate/discounts of CLEs

(109 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * A discounted rate for CLE courses for FRP's.
- * A discounted rate for the CLE's.
- * Assistance with seminar costs.
- * Continuing education benefits/discounts.
- * Discount on CLE classes.
- * Discounted CLE classes for the credits we are required to obtain.
- * Discounted CLE courses.
- * Discounted cost of attending seminars.
- * Discounts for the membership (if not paid by the employer).
- * Discounts on CLE courses so we can afford to attend.

- * Discounts on CLE courses.
- * Discounts on continuing education.
- * Free or low cost CLE seminars.
- * Less expensive continuing education materials.
- * Less expensive seminars, CD's, etc., for Florida Registered Paralegals.
- * Lower cost seminars for CLE credits.
- * Reduced price for the continuing education.
- * Reduced rate on CLEs.
- * Seminar discounts.
- * Seminar discounts. If law students and judges can get them, why can't we?

12. How often do you read the “Florida Registered Paralegal Corner”, located in both the printed and online versions of The Florida Bar News?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Frequently	40
Occasionally	31
Rarely	15
Never	11
I do not read The Florida Bar News	3

- * Nearly three-quarters (71%) “at least occasionally” read the Florida Registered Paralegal Corner located in both the printed and online versions of The Florida Bar News.

13. In the past 12 months, how often have you visited The Florida Bar's website?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
None	5
1 to 2 times	12
3 to 5 times	22
More than 5 times	61

- * 83% of all respondents report visiting The Florida Bar's website at least three times during the past 12 months. Additionally, over three-fifths (61%) of all respondents report visiting the Bar's website more than five times during that same period.

**14. The Florida Bar recently created a new way to search for Florida Registered Paralegals on the Bar's website by allowing for alphabetical and city searches. Have you utilized this search instrument in the past year?
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION -- CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes – performed an alphabetical search	49
Yes – performed a search by city	26
No	46

- * Over half (54%) of all respondents have utilized the recently developed method of searching for Florida Registered Paralegals on The Florida Bar's website, with the majority of those using the alphabetical search feature.

15. Please list any features, not currently on The Florida Bar’s website, that you would like to see added in the near future:

(504 responses received)

A total of 504 respondents listed features, not currently on The Florida Bar’s website, that they would like to see added in the near future. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the three most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
None/can’t think of any	269
Improved or additional FRP search capabilities	54
Additional CLE/educational opportunities	35

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of what features, not currently on The Florida Bar’s website, respondents would like to see added in the near future, 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the three most frequently mentioned categories.

None/can’t think of any

(269 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Cannot think of any.
- * Fine as it is.
- * I cannot think of any. I am pleased with the website.
- * I cannot think of anything right now.
- * I can't think of any.
- * I have no additional features to offer.
- * I have none in mind.
- * No better ideas.
- * No thoughts at this time.
- * None at this time.
- * None known at this time.

- * None that I can think of.
- * None.
- * Nothing at this time.
- * Nothing comes to mind.
- * Nothing right now, the website is very helpful and informative.
- * Present features are OK.
- * There is nothing I can presently think of.
- * Unknown at this time.
- * Your website is great.

Improved or additional FRP search capabilities

(54 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * A feature to search for paralegals like how you can search for attorneys, i.e., by their names.
- * A name search feature for Florida Registered Paralegals similar to that used for looking up attorney members.
- * A standard name search for FRP's similar to what is offered for attorney searches.
- * Alphabetical search is tedious, as each page must be opened before proceeding to the next, e.g. If I were looking for a person named Stewart, I'd have to manually page through all the "S" listings starting with "Sa" until I reached Stewart. This gets immensely frustrating.
- * Expand searching for FRP's by typing a name and not scrolling through the alphabet which is extremely inefficient. This is computer science, not science fiction. Join the 21st century.
- * Make it easier for FRP's to search for other FRP's. I usually have to Google "Florida Bar Paralegal" to find the link to the paralegal login since it's not very obvious on the Bar home page where to go.
- * I think a good optional tool would be if web searches for registered paralegals could be done by using their Bar number.

- * I think that FRP's should be able to be looked up individually rather than having to scroll through an alphabetical list. Potential employers may want to instantly verify the FRP verification rather than spend several minutes searching through the list.
- * I was looking for a co-workers name under the alphabetical listing. Her last name starts with a "C" and since there was, only an arrow-indicating page forward or page backward I had to "flip" through several pages before I came to her name. Maybe there should be a "search" box so one can search by either the first name or last name and arrive at the paralegal's name much quicker than having to go page by page.
- * I would like to be able to search Florida Registered Paralegals by name. My practice is focused in Commercial Litigation. I would like to be able to confirm whether my peers on the other side of my cases are Florida Registered Paralegals and download their contact information, as we are able to do for attorneys.
- * I would like to be able to search for a Florida Registered Paralegal by name in a manner similar to searching for an attorney.
- * I would like to see a "Paralegal" or a "Search for a Paralegal" section added. When my prospective employer went to check my FRP status, I actually had to show him how to navigate the site.
- * Improve FRP name search so as to only have to enter complete or partial name, and not need to scroll through entire first letter to find query.
- * It was still very time consuming to search alphabetically. There should be an option to type part of the last name. Otherwise, you have to continue to hit "next page". I recently just became registered so I am not familiar with all of the benefits at this time.
- * It would be easier if the search feature for FRP's were similar to the one for attorneys with fields for input. Searching through all FRP's in Tampa, for instance, was time consuming.
- * On home page of the webpage, there is a link to "Find a Lawyer," I would like to see a link that states "Find a Paralegal." One does not know that such a link is available without a lot of switching pages. Also, perhaps there is a way to connect paralegals and attorneys in the webpage and for them to view a paralegal's credentials.
- * Please, please, instead of just the letter, have a search engine that allows us to simply type the last name of the paralegal. Right now, we click on the letter and it takes FOREVER to get to the individual that we are searching for. Also, we need more active county involvement.
- * Searching for paralegals is still difficult. Need to be able to refine searches by zip code or specific individual.

- * The FRP search should mimic the attorney search and offer the same features, i.e. downloadable contact card.
- * To be able to search for a member by name. It takes too long to find someone either alphabetically or by city because you have to scroll until you can get to that person and if you do not know the exact spelling of that person's name, you are not going to find them.

Additional CLE/educational opportunities

(35 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * A listing of the CLE's that are approved for Florida Registered Paralegals is needed.
- * Additional CLE courses for paralegals.
- * CLE categories for paralegals.
- * CLE classes specifically for the paralegal.
- * CLE classes that are offered locally. (Pinellas/Hillsborough County).
- * CLE educational materials for paralegals -- on separate web pages.
- * CLE opportunities for paralegals.
- * CLE options.
- * CLE's specifically for paralegals.
- * Continuing education opportunities.
- * Continuing education programs that are approved by The Florida Bar for paralegals.
- * Emails suggesting current CLE available to paralegals in Florida.
- * I would like to see more programs for local education for paralegals listed and available on the website.
- * I would like to see that the CLE's that I have posted are accepted by The Florida Bar, perhaps twice or three times a year rather than just seeing the credits that I posted. When do they become approved? Is it at the end of the three-year posting time?
- * Listing of CLE programs.
- * Listings of reduced cost or discounted CLE programs.

- * More Florida Bar approved CLE courses just for paralegals, or in conjunction with attorney seminars.
- * More continuing education listings.
- * More information regarding free seminars for CLE credits.
- * Upcoming educational opportunities.

16. In your opinion, what is the most important issue impacting paralegals today?

(1,112 responses received)

A total of 1,112 respondents reported what they believe is the most important issue impacting paralegals today. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the five most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
CLE programs/educational opportunities	165
Distinguishing between paralegals and legal assistants/secretaries	120
Recognition/acknowledgement of paralegals	110
Salary/compensation/benefits	109
Job stability/security/market	94

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of what FRP members believe is the most important issue impacting paralegals today, 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the five most frequently mentioned categories.

CLE programs/educational opportunities

(165 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Ability to take quality CLE courses.
- * Advanced continuing education. Most of the continuing education that is being offered is too basic.
- * Affordable, accessible education.
- * Availability of continuing education.

- * Continuing education. Particularly in the area I work in, estate planning and probate, immediate knowledge of changes in federal tax laws and changes in the Florida Probate Code and Florida Trust Code are crucial.
- * Education and the expense of obtaining CLE credits. Paralegals are charged the same price as attorneys, yet we earn substantially less money.
- * Educational opportunities.
- * Enhancing education and keeping up with it.
- * Enough CLE programs dealing with support staff issues.
- * For me, affordable and convenient education opportunities.
- * I believe there should be more seminars directed to paralegals.
- * More affordable CLE seminars.
- * More available seminars and continuing legal education.
- * More cost effective continuing legal education.
- * More legal education.
- * Most of the continuing education classes are geared for attorneys.
- * Need more CLE opportunities for paralegals.
- * Not having enough continuing educational programs for the paralegal. There are many seminars on legal aspects geared towards the attorney, however, it would be beneficial to have basic, intermediate and advanced courses in everyday techniques, handling clients, caseload files, discussing files and pertinent information with the busy attorney, as well as properly addressing sensitive material.
- * Obtaining quality continuing education that is applicable to developing practical skills.
- * Staying updated through continued legal education.

Distinguishing between paralegals and legal assistants/secretaries

(120 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Attorneys continuing to use FRP's as legal secretaries.
- * Being recognized for qualifications and not being lumped in with legal assistants/secretaries.

- * Clearly distinguishing between certified or registered paralegals and then also between paralegals and office staff. I believe there should be more clarity between the terms of secretary, legal assistant and paralegal.
- * For paralegals to stand apart from legal secretaries or legal assistants.
- * I think too many paralegals are still being used as legal assistants and they are not being utilized to their fullest potential in firms.
- * In my opinion, the most important issue impacting paralegals today is the lack of stature of the paralegal in a law office. In other words, there is little difference between the job description and the pay of a "legal assistant" and "paralegal", even though the paralegal has obtained the appropriate, additional education and credentials. We have a long way to go in order to distinguish between the two positions and treating the paralegal as the professional they are.
- * Making us legal billing professionals with a way to distinguish us from that of legal assistants/secretaries.
- * Not being treated as career professionals, but as secretaries.
- * Some attorneys are still not utilizing paralegals to their fullest extent. I am seeing paralegals doing the same work as a legal secretary. I am also seeing legal secretaries using the paralegal title and doing clerical work only.
- * Still the separation of legal secretaries/legal assistants from paralegals.
- * That anyone can call themselves a paralegal. It makes it complicated that you can have varying degrees of paralegals out there - those with no certifications whatsoever, those with national organization certifications (NALA) and those with state certifications (FRP). You do not know if the "paralegal" you are working with knows their stuff, or is really just a glorified secretary or legal assistant.
- * The blending of legal secretary and paralegal positions.
- * The confusion between the use of the "legal assistant", "paralegal", and "legal secretary" names.
- * The days of separation between secretary and paralegal are over. I believe it is way too easy to call yourself "paralegal" and be accepted as such even though you may not be in any way qualified to call yourself "paralegal". Other than the qualifications such as CLA and FRP, there is no distinction. I personally feel I have earned the right to be paid according to my experience/qualifications, but I am not sure employers/attorneys make that distinction.

- * The difference between a secretary, legal assistant, and a paralegal.
- * The distinction between legal assistants, secretaries, and paralegals.
- * The separation of the duties and functions of the paralegal in the law firm from those of a legal secretary or other assistant position. In a way, education of attorneys is necessary to most efficiently utilize their paralegal's skills and education.
- * The term "paralegal" is used so loosely that anyone working for a lawyer for a few years can call themselves a paralegal. I actually spent the time and money to go to college and get a degree in paralegal studies. Now, it doesn't really mean anything because everyone calls themselves a paralegal whether they really are one or not. There should be some delineation between secretaries/assistants and those of us who have actually studied and worked to be "paralegals".
- * There seems to be attorneys who feel the need to utilize paralegals as secretaries (a two-for-one, if you will) and this should not be. FRP's and CP's are not to be used in this fashion and awareness is required.
- * Understanding the difference between paralegal and legal assistant.

Recognition/acknowledgement of paralegals

(110 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Acknowledgment and respect from attorneys -- I have not met one YET who gives us the credence we deserve. Paralegals are to the law field what Physician Assistants are to the medical field. While doctors have richly embraced the P.A. and value them as a colleague, the same is NOT true with attorneys and paralegals.
- * Being recognized as more than an "assistant".
- * Getting recognition for the education and/or experience that we put in.
- * I believe there is not enough recognition. Paralegals make the firm.
- * Importance of being recognized by employers.
- * Lack of recognition.
- * Not enough recognition for the hard work we do.
- * Not getting enough recognition for the work they perform.
- * Not recognized or appreciated for our education.

- * Paralegals today are at times not respected as legal professionals. Many people under appreciate their knowledge and hard work. This program makes it a bit more official and may help paralegals be recognized as part of the legal community.
- * Recognition as a professional. I do not consider myself a "clerical" worker and would not work in a capacity where I was considered both a secretary and paralegal. Although I do some clerical work, such as typing, I am considered a paralegal and valued for my knowledge and experience. However, I do not get the perks that attorneys get even though I do equivalent work.
- * Recognition by all attorneys of our professional value to their practice.
- * Recognition by attorneys of the value of the work performed by paralegals, as well as recognition of a paralegal's value to their clients.
- * Recognition in the community.
- * Respect and acknowledgment from lawyers.
- * Respect and recognition for the position.
- * Respect for what we do; the fact that although most of us have not been to law school, we have the intelligence and drive to be "right arms" to our attorney employers. So many times, I have heard my colleagues tell me that they have performed very in-depth and complicated research for their attorneys, only to find out that the attorney has taken all of the credit!
- * That paralegals should be recognized as an important part of the attorney's practice in representing their clients.
- * The recognition that we deserve.
- * There is often a lack of acknowledgment and/or appreciation for the work we do.

Salary/compensation/benefits

(109 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Being compensated for their value.
- * Competitive salary and benefits based on experience.
- * Lack of pay for the workload.
- * Low salaries.
- * Overworked and underpaid.

- * Pay scale.
- * Poor salary.
- * Poor salary. We should be compensated more than just a legal secretary.
- * Salaries.
- * Salary basis.
- * Salary caps from employers.
- * Salary does not equal years of experience.
- * Salary is the most important issue impacting paralegals today. Some paralegals are making \$100,000, while others are barely making \$30,000.
- * Salary range. I do not think paralegals get the deserved salary that aligns with experience and caseload. I am in-house so it is a bit different than firm paralegals, sometimes in-house does not receive overtime, other times we are not included in pertinent decision making. While in-house paralegals handle different aspects of cases and still provide great service to the corporation and legal department; they are overlooked. In-house paralegals are a different breed but we work just as hard as outside counsel paralegals.
- * Salary. Overworked and underpaid.
- * Salary; low wages.
- * The salaries that employers are using as a base salary is way below what it should be, even in today's economy.
- * Tremendous workload without even compensation.
- * Wages.
- * We need a more equitable pay scale which reflects our abilities and contributions. Law firms bill a fair amount for paralegal time, yet the pay for such work is not really in line with what is billed. Also, because most paralegals are women, we still make 75% of what a man would make in a similar professional capacity.

Job stability/security/market

(94 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * As the job market changes, more firms are looking for timekeepers rather than clerical. I want to be as hireable as possible in case I need to find a new job.
- * Benefits shrinking and job security in a bad economy.
- * Downsizing, i.e. layoffs due to the economy and firms hiring legal assistants to perform the paralegal job so they can keep their costs down.
- * Finding jobs.
- * Getting and keeping a job in the industry.
- * In today's economy, I think one of the big issues is the job market - how to set yourself apart, how to market yourself and probably most important, how to compete in the global market and going contract vs. full time.
- * Job availability and job security. Hopefully FRP classification will allow attorneys and law firms to hire and keep employed FRP's in a tight economy.
- * Job market and cutbacks.
- * Job security.
- * Jobs being filled by less experienced workers to cut costs.
- * Lack of employment opportunities due to the economic situation, and devaluation by some firms of the paralegal's contribution to the firm.
- * Law firms that are cutting paralegal positions and replacing them with attorneys.
- * Loss of jobs. I have seen two paralegals let go in our office with no notice and no severance.
- * Not enough jobs in the marketplace.
- * One of the issues of concern in South Florida is the fact that paralegals find themselves competing for jobs with newly graduated attorneys who are not able to find a job in their profession.
- * Staying employed in today's job market.
- * The economy and the resulting diminishing of employment opportunities.

- * The job market, should anyone be laid off and need to find new employment.
- * The job market.
- * The lack of available jobs in particular areas of law.

17. How can The Florida Bar make FRP membership more valuable to you?

(787 responses received)

A total of 787 respondents reported how The Florida Bar can make FRP membership more valuable to them. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the four most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Additional CLE/educational opportunities	160
Nothing/no suggestions/TFB is doing a good job	153
Lower costs of membership/offer discounts on CLE costs	128
Better educate attorneys/public about Florida Registered Paralegals	48

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of the responses related to how The Florida Bar can make FRP membership more valuable, 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the four most frequently mentioned categories.

Additional CLE/educational opportunities

(160 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * A wider variety of CLE courses for FRPs such as guardianship, estate planning, and probate.
- * Additional CLE courses.
- * By elevating the level of educational programs tailored to paralegals.
- * By offering more CLE courses/seminars directed specifically to FRPs for the credits we are required to have in order to keep our FRP registration and to make those courses affordable.
- * By offering more paralegal based seminars - right now they are too few and far between.
- * By providing CLER opportunities for paralegals.

- * CLE opportunities.
- * I feel that most of the Bar's emphasis is on litigation paralegals. More seminars and educational materials for transactional paralegals (real estate, corporate) would be helpful.
- * I have a hard time finding good continuing education.
- * I think the Bar should realize that not all paralegals are NALA or NFPA members and that the Bar should not limit CLE credits to only programs that are either offered by the Bar, NALA or NFPA. I also think the Bar could do better job of creating more educational opportunities (seminars, etc.) just for paralegals.
- * I would like to see more CLE courses offered to FRP's.
- * More CLE offerings specifically geared toward paralegal tasks and case involvement.
- * More educational opportunities.
- * More seminars for attorneys and paralegals.
- * Offer more CLE courses for paralegals.
- * Offer more CLE courses geared toward the paralegal profession.
- * Offer seminars more specifically related to paralegals. Ethics, etc.
- * Offer seminars to FRPs.
- * Offering more CLE credits for solely paralegals.
- * Provide CLE seminars on important topics and various fields in which FRPs are utilized.
- * Seminars for paralegals continuing education.

Nothing/no suggestions/TFB is doing a good job

(153 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * At this point in time they are doing a good job.
- * Cannot think of anything.
- * Do not have any suggestions at this time.
- * I am satisfied with all of the membership benefits that we have.

- * I am satisfied with what has been done so far.
- * I am very happy with my membership as an FRP and cannot think of anything that could be done differently.
- * I am very satisfied with my FRP membership.
- * I cannot think of anything at this time.
- * I cannot think of anything that would increase its value. I value my membership and am very proud to be a Florida Registered Paralegal.
- * I do not know. I think it is doing a fine job.
- * I don't know. It provides great benefits currently.
- * I have no complaints and consider it quite valuable as it is.
- * I think being a member is valuable enough.
- * I think that The Florida Bar is doing an excellent job.
- * It is already a valuable asset in our profession.
- * Keep doing what you are doing.
- * Keep up the good work.
- * Nothing else. You are doing a good job.
- * Nothing that I would change.
- * So far, it meets the value which I require.

Lower costs of membership/offer discounts on CLE

(128 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Cut costs.
- * Discounted rates for CLE seminars.
- * Discounts on continuing education and more educational opportunities for education.
- * Fund or discount association membership dues for paralegals whose attorneys do not pay for them.

- * Give good discounts in continued education.
- * If the cost was less.
- * In this economy, make it less expensive for the CLE hours.
- * Include discounts for seminars if you are a FRP.
- * It would be nice if the fees were lower, or in the alternative, that more CLE courses for paralegals were available at no charge through the website.
- * Less costly seminars, CD's, etc.
- * Lower cost for paralegals participating in CLE courses.
- * Lower the cost and provide low-cost CLE in order to provide the training that paralegals need, both to maintain FRP status and to strengthen their skill and knowledge base. I do not think everything is about cost, but this program needs to be more accessible to beginning paralegals whom may or may not have jobs in the legal field that pay competitive salaries.
- * Lower the cost of membership.
- * Make CLE's easier to attend/more affordable. Make membership more affordable.
- * More reasonable costs for attending seminars.
- * Offer discounts for government employees. The State of Florida currently does not "recognize" my FRP status in any way, yet I still pay for it out of my pocket.
- * Provide more free or discounted CLE courses for obtaining the required credits. They are a bit pricey.
- * Reduce price.
- * Reduce the cost of membership, renewal, and a reduced rate to attend the CLE courses.
- * Reduce the fees for seminars. Reduce the annual dues. We do not earn nearly as much as attorneys and they are not paying for our seminars.
- * Reduced prices for attorney seminars so that paralegals may attend at a reasonable cost. Many law firms do not pay for any CLE for a paralegal.

Better educate attorneys/public about Florida Registered Paralegals

(48 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * Add more communication to the legal community about proper utilization and compensation of paralegals. Thank you!
- * Advise attorneys that paralegals are a valuable part of the legal profession. Still have some attorneys that will not respond to phone calls from paralegals on a professional level. They will only talk to the attorneys on the case.
- * Better educate attorneys and the public as to what "FRP" stands for and why.
- * By educating attorneys and the public as to what an FRP actually is.
- * By helping employers understand how more valuable a Florida Registered Paralegal is to their firm!
- * Educate attorneys of the benefits to their practice of having a FRP on staff. In addition, educate attorneys as to the differences between paralegals and legal assistants.
- * Educate the attorneys and law office managers regarding FRP, and encourage them to support and finance their paralegal's membership.
- * Educate the attorneys to know how to make the best use of the knowledge and experience of the paralegal.
- * Educating attorneys on the benefits of having Certified/Florida Registered Paralegals.
- * Educating the attorneys on the value they should receive from the paralegal that is associated with The Florida Bar.
- * Education to the attorney members of the Bar about the importance of the paralegal profession. Attorneys and firm administrators need to be educated about the requirements that paralegals need to have in order to renew their memberships.
- * I think the biggest thing would be educating attorneys. I feel that, often, there is a complete disconnect between the paralegal (as a profession) and the attorney (as a profession). Often the women's initiatives are only focused on female attorneys. Professional paralegals also have families, schedule conflicts and, while attention is given to women attorneys, female paralegal issues are ignored.
- * I think The Florida Bar should educate attorneys on the importance of having a certified paralegal and/or FRP and why it is valuable and beneficial to them and their practice.
- * Increased education and better distinction about those who are registered and those who are not.

- * Instruct attorneys to value their paralegals, especially those that have their FRP's and to consult their cases with them in order to ensure the quality of work and rules of professional conduct is enforced in the work place.
- * It would be nice if The Florida Bar would suggest to attorneys that they look to hire paralegals with an FRP. I think that would help give a bit more value to the FRP.
- * Make attorneys more aware of this designation. Attorneys in my office would not be aware of FRP status had I not explained it to them.
- * Make it more valuable to the community of lawyers. If the attorneys don't value it, what is the incentive?
- * Remind attorneys that Florida Registered Paralegals should be allowed to attend their local bar events.

18. Are you male or female?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Female	95
Male	5

- * A large majority (95%) of respondents are female. This percentage is consistent with what is on The Florida Bar's database for Florida Registered Paralegal members who have voluntarily reported their gender.

19. What is your age group?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than 25 years of age	<1
25 to 30 years of age	5
31 to 40 years of age	19
41 to 50 years of age	35
51 to 65 years of age	39
Over 65 years of age	2

- * Nearly two-fifths (39%) of respondents are between 51 and 65 years of age. Just over one-third (35%) of respondents are between 41 and 50 years of age.

**20. Do you belong to any of the following local paralegal associations?
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION -- CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
PAF	18
Other association (e.g. NALA)	10
CFPA	4
NEFPA	3
SFPA	3
FALSS	2
FAPA	2
NWFPA	2
SWFPA	2
GCPA	1
None	64

- * Over one-third (36%) of all respondents indicate that they also belong to at least one other paralegal association. Nearly one-fifth (18%) of all respondents, and about half (49%) of respondents who report belonging to another paralegal association (See 20A), indicate that they have membership in the Paralegal Association of Florida (PAF). The most frequently mentioned response under the “Other” category is NALA (National Association of Legal Assistants/Paralegals).

**20A. Do you belong to any of the following local paralegal associations?
(INCLUDES ONLY THOSE MEMBERS WHO REPORT BELONGING TO AT
LEAST ONE OTHER ASSOCIATION) (MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION --
CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

<u>Category</u>	(n=716)	<u>Percent</u>
PAF		49
Other association (e.g. NALA)		26
CFPA		9
NEFPA		8
SFPA		7
FALSS		5
NWFPA		5
FAPA		5
GCPA		4
SWFPA		4

21. Who pays for your FRP membership dues?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Your employer	75
You	25

- * Three-quarters (75%) of all respondents report that their employer pays their FRP membership dues.

22. Please list any other thoughts, comments or suggestions that you would like to share with us:

(376 responses received)

A total of 376 respondents provided thoughts, comments or suggestions about the FRP program. Each response was reviewed and categorized. The table below lists the three most frequently mentioned categories.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Thank you/comments of appreciation	86
No suggestions/none	67
Lower costs for membership/CLE	21

To provide the reader with a much more comprehensive view of the various thoughts comments, and suggestions submitted by respondents, 10 to 20 randomly selected responses are displayed below for each of the three most frequently mentioned categories.

Thank you/comments of appreciation

(86 responses) (20 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * At this time, I feel The Florida Bar has done an excellent job in managing this area.
- * Excellent program - keep up the good work!
- * I am pleased to be a member of The Florida Bar in my capacity as a paralegal. I appreciate the standards the Bar has established for obtaining and maintaining the FRP designation.
- * I am thrilled that I have had this opportunity to register for the FRP. I have actually worked in the legal profession for over 30 years, first for my husband, and now for one of my sons. Thank you for the opportunity to be grandfathered in.

- * I am very grateful to The Florida Bar for the opportunity to become a paralegal and for all the benefits offered through the membership.
- * I am very pleased that The Florida Bar recognizes the value of paralegals.
- * I appreciate the efforts The Florida Bar has made to solicit and consider the opinions of its FRP members in an effort to improve the program.
- * I appreciate the opportunity to have input in this survey ... keep up the good work!
- * I have enjoyed receiving the information you have provided me with over the years. Keep up the good work.
- * I thank The Florida Bar for creating the FLP standard for paralegals working under the supervision of their attorney and for allowing the paralegal profession a stronger voice in The Florida Bar.
- * Thank you for all your work, it's great to have an organization that supports paralegals!
- * Thank you for allowing paralegals the opportunity to provide our opinions and for allowing us a voice in the legal community.
- * Thank you for including me in your survey and for making me feel my opinion counts.
- * Thank you for making the effort to make improvements on our behalf.
- * Thank you for taking the time to prepare and send this survey. I am very happy with The Florida Bar!
- * Thank you for taking the time to review this program.
- * Thank you so much for the opportunity to express my thought and suggestions.
- * The FRP program is a very good start toward job growth and satisfaction. Thank you for recognizing our importance in the legal field. Thank you for continuing to want us to improve our job skills by requiring us to complete educational courses that will guarantee that we improve our knowledge of legal issues.
- * The only thing at this time I would like to say is: thank you for the wonderful opportunity!
- * We are very fortunate that The Florida Bar welcomed paralegals via registration program.

No suggestions/none

(67 responses) (10 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * At this juncture, I have no other thoughts, comments or suggestions.
- * Can't think of anything.
- * Everything is O.K.
- * I cannot think of anything right now.
- * I have no concerns at this time.
- * No other suggestions.
- * None.
- * None at present.
- * None at this time.
- * Not at this point.

Lower costs of membership/CLE

(21 responses) (10 randomly selected responses displayed below)

- * As we do not make nearly the income as most attorneys, I feel that FRPs should get discounts for the seminars and we should not be paying the same price as the attorneys.
- * Cost is the issue when having to pay for membership, CLE, etc. I know of several paralegals that have been replaced with non-titled assistants at a lower cost to employers.
- * Encourage employers to pay or share in the cost FRP, state, and local association dues.
- * I am worried what the next step will be for paralegals. Will we have to have some type of insurance? If this is not about money, then the dues should be reduced to an amount more affordable for all. Although my dues will be paid through my T&E, that just means less money for seminars that I feel could benefit me more.
- * I have so many friends who have lost their jobs in this economy. It is sad to me that it is like a lifeline cut off. If some kind of hardship program for those in this situation were offered it would be helpful, such as free or discounted CLE or membership, and extension of FRP status to those who are not in an office but who continue to take CLE classes.

- * I will be much happier if I do not need to pay my membership fees and CLE.
- * In programs that are offered by The Florida Bar for CLE credits, paralegals are charged just as much, and sometimes more, for the same CLE courses offered to attorneys. In providing CLE programs, The Florida Bar needs to consider the financial circumstances of the participants. Rates for paralegals should be significantly lower than the rates for the attorneys. For this reason, many paralegals struggle to maintain their CLE credits as required.
- * It would be beneficial if CLE providers kept in mind that quite a few Florida Registered Paralegals incur all membership and CLE costs themselves. Many of the seminars, classes, etc. are simply too expensive on a paralegal's salary.
- * It would be nice if things were a bit more affordable. Most employers have not given raises in years and have cut back on allowances for further education. The CLE's can be quite expensive. More affordable alternative would be a nice option.
- * Please lower the cost of membership or reduce the amount of credits necessary to complete the renewal; I cannot afford both.
- * Renewal fees should be paid 12 months out vs. just a few months after the application date, or provide a reduced fee for the first year if the renewal date falls within a few months of the application date.