



Certified Legal Manager (CLM)SM Certification Program

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CLMSM
Certified Legal Manager



Your connection
to knowledge, resources and networking



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As the legal services industry becomes more diverse and competitive, the need for capable managers has never been greater. Whether you have worked your way up through the ranks of legal administration or crossed over from another industry, you know that every legal administrator must demonstrate a high level of expertise and ability to be an effective manager.

ALA offers the opportunity for individuals to add to their credentials by becoming a Certified Legal Manager (CLM)^{SM*}. The CLM certification program allows a qualified legal administrator to demonstrate, through an examination process, a mastery of the core areas of knowledge identified as essential to the effective performance of a principal administrator.

Regardless of the stage in your career, becoming certified adds a valuable dimension to your professional development. This achievement can help to instill greater confidence in your abilities and identifies you as an experienced legal manager who understands the unique issues of managing a law firm or legal department.

The following provides an overview of the CLM program. For an Information and Application Packet, visit alanet.org/clm.

Visit ALA's Web site

alanet.org/clm

for more information

About the Association of Legal Administrators

The Association of Legal Administrators is the credentialing body of the CLM certification program. The mission of the Association is to promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of all members of the legal management team; improve the quality of management in law firms and other legal service organizations; and represent professional legal management and managers to the legal community and to the community at large.

Achievement

“Working towards my CLM certification was the best thing I’ve done for myself in a long time. The wide range of knowledge that you will cover while studying for this exam, makes you feel like you can take on any task, even if you have never done it before. It was a lot of work, but well worth it.”

Dorothea M. Downey, CLM
Quincy, Massachusetts

Overview of ALA's CLM Program

What is certification?

Certification is defined as a credentialing process by which a profession grants recognition to an individual who meets certain predetermined qualifications specified by that profession.

Why certification?

ALA's voluntary Certified Legal Manager (CLM) program was developed in order to provide legal administrators with an opportunity to demonstrate a mastery of the core competencies of knowledge identified as essential to the effective performance of a principal administrator. CLMs are recognized as administrators who have met the work experience requirement, displayed a commitment to continuing education, abide by ALA's Code of Ethics and passed a comprehensive examination.

Job requirements for principal administrators working in different environments are not exactly the same. The content of the CLM exam is targeted to an individual who is expected to have day-to-day, hands-on involvement in all areas of legal administrations.

Additionally, passing the CLM examination demonstrates that an individual has the management skills and the depth and breadth of knowledge that would enable him or her to visit any 30- to 50-attorney law office, review practices and procedures, and be conversant about, and offer advice, in all areas of legal administration without relying on others.

What does competency mean?

In 2012, ALA conducted its fourth Competency-Based Education Job and Needs Analysis. Through this extensive research, ALA investigated the job of a legal administrator and identified an impressive 65 competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) critical to successfully perform the administrator's job. These analyses are the guidelines used in the development of ALA's educational and certification programs.

"Preparing for the exam helped me to learn many new things while adding clarity to the things I already knew. My specialty was Finance, but I ended up taking a position that utilizes my new CLM skills. I'm thankful that the CLM properly prepared me for it."

David Glicksman, CLM
Director of Finance
Lester Schwab Katz & Dwyer, LLP

Becoming a Certified Legal Manager

What must I do to become certified?

To become certified, ALA members or nonmembers must meet the eligibility requirements and pass the certification examination given by the Association of Legal Administrators. Legal administrators in Canada and other countries are eligible to become certified, but must realize that major portions of the examination are based on U.S. federal law.

How does becoming certified benefit me?

Certification ensures recognition of your expertise, assists in your development and self-improvement, and establishes the professional standards of your occupation. In addition, it helps junior-level professionals gain top-level acknowledgment, and provides an avenue for senior practitioners to stay current in the field while improving their performance and proficiency.

How does becoming certified benefit my employer/organization?

Certification increases the level of competency of the individual to manage a law office; provides a way to encourage and improve job performance for its employees; serves as an aid for recruitment; and acknowledges training and development of those who are certified. Additionally, there are significant liability insurance discounts for those who employ a Certified Legal Manager. For more information, visit alanet.org/clm.

“The study material tied together all the areas of law firm management for me, areas that are typically handled by our firm’s HR, Finance, Marketing and Technology Departments. I’m proud of my CLM designation and don’t regret a minute of study time. This process made me a better law firm administrator.”

Cheryl Iglar, CLM
Administrator
Guilday Schwartz Simpson West Hatch & Lowe, PA
Tallahassee, Florida

What Are the Eligibility Requirements?

Pride

Interested participants must meet the requirements in four areas:

Employment

You must be currently involved in the full-time work of managing a legal organization, such as a private law firm, legal clinic, governmental agency, corporate legal department or court system, or have been working in such full-time employment within 24 months of the date of application.

Experience

If you are a principal administrator, you must have at least three years of experience as an exempt-level principal administrator or as a branch office manager of a law firm or legal department. If you are a functional specialist, such as the manager of Human Resources, Finance, Facilities, Information Systems, or Marketing, you must have at least three years of experience in a supervisory position.

Education

Given that not all competencies are conducive to a multiple-choice test setting, evidence of familiarity with these areas is completed through the education prerequisites as follows. All candidates must complete at least 120 minutes of coursework in each of five management categories: writing skills, communication skills, self-management skills, information technology and organizational development. Coursework may include workshops, seminars and conference programs offered by ALA, law-related associations, other professional associations and organizations, professional training companies, or colleges and universities. All coursework must be completed in a period of 24 months prior to the application date.

Applicants who are functional specialists (HR, Finance, Facilities, etc.) must complete an additional 15 hours of coursework in designated areas other than their field of specialty. All coursework must be completed in a period of 24 months prior to the application date.

Ethics

Participants will be required to affirm in writing that they endorse the Association of Legal Administrators' Code of Ethics.

CLM Exam and Contact Information

How long does my CLM designation last?

You will be designated as a CLM for three years. After that time, you can become recertified every three years by providing evidence of participation in 36 hours of continuing professional education in designated fields.

How much does it cost to become certified?

The examination fee for ALA members is \$520. The fee for nonmembers is \$625. The annual maintenance fee is \$55. The application fee for recertification is \$170.

What happens if I don't pass the examination?

If you do not pass the examination, you will be allowed to retake it. You may retake the examination two times within a four-year period from the date of the initial exam.

What if I am interested in taking the examination?

Contact ALA Headquarters at 847.267.1252 or visit ALA's Web site (alanet.org/clm) for an Information and Application Packet. The Packet includes general program information, eligibility requirements, an application, test dates and locations, fees, deadline dates, a suggested reading list, sample test questions and recertification requirements.

Recognition

“ Having the certification gives me an advantage in the marketplace that is needed in these tough economic times. If you want to stand out from the crowd, take on the challenge of attaining certification, and prove to yourself and others that you have what it takes to contribute to a firm’s success.”

Don Anderson, CLM
Executive Director
Williams Montgomery & John, Ltd.
Chicago, Illinois



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