LIMITED PRACTICE RULE FOR LIMITED LICENSE LEGAL TECHNICIANS

A. Purpose. The Civil Legal Needs Study (2003), commissioned by the Supreme Court, clearly established that the legal needs of the consuming public are not currently being met. The public is entitled to be assured that legal services are rendered only by qualified trained legal practitioners. Only the legal profession is authorized to provide such services. The purpose of this rule is to authorize certain persons to render limited legal assistance or advice in approved practice areas of law. This rule shall prescribe the conditions of and limitations upon the provision of such services in order to protect the public and ensure that only trained and qualified legal practitioners may provide the same. This rule is intended to permit trained Limited License Legal Technicians to provide limited legal assistance under carefully regulated circumstances in ways that expand the affordability of quality legal assistance which protects the public interest.

B. Definitions. For purposes of this rule, the following definitions will apply:

(1) “APR” means the Supreme Court’s Admission to Practice Rules.

(2) “LLLT Board” means the Limited License Legal Technician Board.

(3) “Lawyer” means a person licensed as a lawyer and eligible to practice law in any United States jurisdiction.

(4) “Limited License Legal Technician” (LLLT) means a person qualified by education, training, and work experience who is authorized to engage in the limited practice of law in approved practice areas of law as specified by this rule and related regulations.

(5) “Paralegal/legal assistant” means a person qualified by education, training, or work experience; who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency, or other entity; and who performs specifically delegated substantive law-related work for which a lawyer is responsible.

(6) “Reviewed and approved by a Washington lawyer” means that a Washington lawyer has personally supervised the legal work and documented that supervision by the Washington lawyer’s signature and bar number.

(7) “Substantive law-related work” means work that requires knowledge of legal concepts and is customarily, but not necessarily, performed by a lawyer.

(8) “Supervised” means a lawyer personally directs, approves, and has responsibility for work performed by the Limited License Legal Technician.

(9) “Washington lawyer” means a person licensed and eligible to practice law in Washington and who is an active or emeritus pro bono lawyer member of the Bar.

(10) Words of authority:

(a) “May” means “has discretion to,” “has a right to,” or “is permitted to.”

(b) “Must” or “shall” means “is required to.”

(c) “Should” means “recommended but not required.”

C. Limited License Legal Technician Board

(1) Establishment. There is hereby established a Limited License Legal Technician Board (LLLT Board). The LLLT Board shall consist of 11 voting members appointed by the Supreme
Court. Nine members of the LLLT Board shall be active members of the Washington State Bar Association with at least four active lawyer members, one of whom must have experience practicing in family law, and three active LLLT members. Two members of the LLLT Board shall be Washington residents who do not have a license to practice law. Appointments shall be for staggered three year terms. No member may serve more than two consecutive full three year terms. The validity of the Board’s actions is not affected if the Board’s makeup differs from the stated constitution due to a temporary vacancy in any of the specified positions.

(2) **LLLT Board Duties and Powers.**

(a) Grievances and Discipline. The LLLT Board’s involvement in the investigation, hearing, and appeal procedures for handling complaints of persons aggrieved by the failure of LLLTs to comply with the requirements of this rule and of the LLLT RPC shall be established in the Rules for Enforcement of LLLT Conduct (ELLLLTC).

(b) Approval of Forms. The LLLT Board shall approve standard forms for use by LLLTs in the performance of legal services authorized by this rule.

(c) Rules. The LLLT Board shall propose to the Supreme Court amendments to APR 28, LLLT Rules of Professional Conduct, the Rules for Enforcement of LLLT Conduct, and these rules as may appear necessary to implement and carry out the provisions of this rule.

(d) Establishing and overseeing committees and tenure of members on such committees to carry out the LLLT Board’s duties and powers; including

i. providing continuing legal education to LLLTs;

ii. assessing changes in the law that affect the scope of practice by LLLTs; and

iii. collaborating with other boards and entities regarding the delivery of law related services.

(3) **Administration.** The Bar shall provide reasonably necessary administrative support for the LLLT Board. All notices and filings required by these Rules shall be sent to the headquarters of the Bar.

(4) **Expenses of the LLLT Board.** Members of the LLLT Board shall not be compensated for their services but shall be reimbursed for actual reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties according to the Bar’s expense policies.

D. [Reserved.]

E. [Reserved.]

F. **Scope of Practice Authorized by Limited Practice Rule.** The Limited License Legal Technician shall ascertain whether the issue is within the defined practice area for which the LLLT is licensed. If it is not, the LLLT shall not render any legal assistance on this issue and shall advise the client to seek the services of a lawyer. If the issue is within the defined practice area, the LLLT may render the following limited legal assistance to a pro se client:

(1) Obtain relevant facts, and explain the relevancy of such information to the client;

(2) Inform the client of applicable procedures, including deadlines, documents which must
be filed, and the anticipated course of the legal proceeding;

(3) Inform the client of and assist with applicable procedures for proper service of process and filing of legal documents;

(4) Provide the client with self-help materials prepared by a Washington lawyer or approved by the LLLT Board, which contain information about relevant legal requirements, case law basis for the client's claim, and venue and jurisdiction requirements;

(5) Review documents or exhibits that the client has received and explain them to the client;

(6) Select, complete, file, and effect service of forms that have been approved by the State of Washington, either through a governmental agency or by the Administrative Office of the Courts or the content of which is specified by statute; federal forms; forms prepared by a Washington lawyer; or forms approved by the LLLT Board; and advise the client of the significance of the selected forms to the client's case;

(7) Perform legal research;

(8) Draft letters setting forth legal opinions that are intended to be read by persons other than the client;

(9) Draft documents beyond what is permitted in paragraph (6), if the work is reviewed and approved by a Washington lawyer;

(10) Advise the client as to other documents that may be necessary to the client's case, and explain how such additional documents or pleadings may affect the client's case;

(11) Assist the client in obtaining necessary records, such as birth, death, or marriage certificates.

(12) Communicate and negotiate with the opposing party or the party’s representative regarding procedural matters, such as setting court hearings or other ministerial or civil procedure matters;

(13) Negotiate the client's legal rights or responsibilities, provided that the client has given written consent defining the parameters of the negotiation prior to the onset of the negotiation; and

(14) Render other types of legal assistance when specifically authorized by the scope of practice regulations for the approved practice area in which the LLLT is licensed.

G. Conditions Under Which A Limited License Legal Technician May Provide Services

(1) A Limited License Legal Technician must personally perform the authorized services for the client and may not delegate these to a nonlicensed person. Nothing in this prohibition shall prevent a person who is not a licensed LLLT from performing translation services;

(2) Prior to the performance of the services for a fee, the Limited License Legal Technician shall enter into a written contract with the client, signed by both the client and the Limited License Legal Technician that includes the following provisions:
(a) An explanation of the services to be performed, including a conspicuous statement that the Limited License Legal Technician may not represent the client in court, formal administrative adjudicative proceedings, or other formal dispute resolution process, unless permitted under GR 24(b) or specifically authorized by the scope of practice regulations for the approved practice area in which the LLLT is licensed;

(b) Identification of all fees and costs to be charged to the client for the services to be performed;

(c) A statement that upon the client's request, the LLLT shall provide to the client any documents submitted by the client to the Limited License Legal Technician;

(d) A statement that the Limited License Legal Technician is not a lawyer and may only perform limited legal services. This statement shall be on the first page of the contract in minimum twelve-point bold type print;

(e) A statement describing the Limited License Legal Technician's duty to protect the confidentiality of information provided by the client and the Limited License Legal Technician's work product associated with the services sought or provided by the Limited License Legal Technician;

(f) A statement that the client has the right to rescind the contract at any time and receive a full refund of unearned fees. This statement shall be conspicuously set forth in the contract; and

(g) Any other conditions required by the rules and regulations of the LLLT Board.

(3) A Limited License Legal Technician may not provide services that exceed the scope of practice authorized by this rule, and shall inform the client, in such instance, that the client should seek the services of a lawyer.

(4) A document prepared by an LLLT shall include the LLLT's name, signature, and license number beneath the signature of the client. LLLTs do not need to sign sworn statements or declarations of the client or a third party, and do not need to sign documents that do not require a signature by the client, such as information sheets.

H. Prohibited Acts. In the course of dealing with clients or prospective clients, a Limited License Legal Technician shall not:

(1) Make any statement that the Limited License Legal Technician can or will obtain special favors from or has special influence with any court or governmental agency;

(2) Retain any fees or costs for services not performed;

(3) Refuse to return documents supplied by, prepared by, or paid for by the client, upon the request of the client. These documents must be returned upon request even if there is a fee dispute between the Limited License Legal Technician and the client;

(4) Represent or advertise, in connection with the provision of services, other legal titles or credentials that could cause a client to believe that the Limited License Legal Technician possesses professional legal skills beyond those authorized by the license held by the Limited License Legal Technician;
Represent a client in court proceedings, formal administrative adjudicative proceedings, or other formal dispute resolution process, unless permitted by GR 24 or specifically authorized by the scope of practice regulations for the approved practice area in which the LLLT is licensed;

Provide services to a client in connection with a legal matter in another state, unless permitted by the laws of that state to perform such services for the client;

Represent or otherwise provide legal or law related services to a client, except as permitted by law, this rule or associated rules and regulations;

Conduct or defend a deposition;

Initiate or respond to an appeal to an appellate court; and

Otherwise violate the Limited License Legal Technician Rules of Professional Conduct.

I. Continuing Licensing Requirements

(1) Continuing Education Requirements. Each active Limited License Legal Technician must complete a minimum number of credit hours of approved or accredited education, as prescribed by APR 11.

(2) Financial Responsibility. Each active LLLT shall show proof of ability to respond in damages resulting from their acts or omissions in the performance of services permitted under APR 28 by:

(a) submitting an individual professional liability insurance policy in the amount of at least $100,000 per claim and a $300,000 annual aggregate limit;

(b) submitting a professional liability insurance policy of the employer or the parent company of the employer who has agreed to provide coverage for the LLLT’s ability to respond in damages in the amount of at least $100,000 per claim and a $300,000 annual aggregate limit; or

(c) submitting proof of indemnification by the LLLT’s government employer.

(3) License Fees and Assessments. Each Limited License Legal Technician must pay the annual license fee established by the Board of Governors, subject to review by the Supreme Court, and any mandatory assessments as ordered by the Supreme Court. Provisions in the Bar’s Bylaws regarding procedures for assessing and collecting lawyer license fees and late fees, and regarding deadlines, rebates, apportionment, fee reductions, and exemptions, and any other issues relating to fees and assessments, shall also apply to LLLT license fees and late fees. Failure to pay may result in suspension from practice pursuant to APR 17.

(4) Trust Account. Each active Limited License Legal Technician shall annually certify compliance with Rules 1.15A and 1.15B of the LLLT Rules of Professional Conduct. Such certification shall be filed in a form and manner as prescribed by the Bar and shall include the bank where each account is held and the account number. Failure to certify may result in suspension from practice pursuant to APR 17.

J. Existing Law Unchanged. This rule shall in no way modify existing law prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law.
K. Professional Responsibility and Limited License Legal Technician-Client Relationship

(1) Limited License Legal Technicians acting within the scope of authority set forth in this rule shall be held to the standard of care of a Washington lawyer.

(2) Limited License Legal Technicians shall be held to the ethical standards of the Limited License Legal Technician Rules of Professional Conduct, which shall create an LLLT IOLTA program for the proper handling of funds coming into the possession of the Limited License Legal Technician.

(3) The Washington law of attorney-client privilege and law of a lawyer's fiduciary responsibility to the client shall apply to the Limited License Legal Technician-client relationship to the same extent as it would apply to an attorney-client relationship.

L. Confidentiality and Public Records. GR 12.4 shall apply to access to LLLT Board records.

M. Inactive Status. An LLLT may request transfer to inactive status after being admitted. An LLLT on inactive status is required to pay an annual license fee as established by the Board of Governors and approved by the Supreme Court.

N. Reinstatement to Active Status. An LLLT on inactive status may return to active status by filing an application and complying with the procedures set forth for lawyer members of the Bar in the Bar’s Bylaws.

O. Voluntary Resignation. Any Limited License Legal Technician may request to voluntarily resign the LLLT license by notifying the Bar in such form and manner as the Bar may prescribe. If there is a disciplinary investigation or proceeding then pending against the LLLT, or if the LLLT has knowledge that the filing of a grievance of substance against such LLLT is imminent, resignation is permitted only under the provisions of the applicable disciplinary rules. An LLLT who resigns the LLLT license cannot practice law in Washington in any manner, unless they are otherwise licensed or authorized to do so by the Supreme Court.

P. Regulations. The LLLT Board may adopt regulations pertinent to its duties and powers subject to the approval of the Supreme Court. Proposed regulations should be provided to the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors for informational purposes.

[Adopted effective September 1, 2012; Amended effective August 20, 2013; February 3, 2015; June 21, 2016; September 1, 2017, June 4, 2019; January 1, 2023; June 27, 2023; January 23, 2024.]
REGULATION 1.  [Reserved.]

REGULATION 2.  APPROVED PRACTICE AREAS—SCOPE OF PRACTICE AUTHORIZED BY LIMITED LICENSE LEGAL TECHNICIAN RULE

In each practice area in which an LLLT is licensed, the LLLT shall comply with the provisions defining the scope of practice as found in APR 28 and as described herein.

A. Issues Beyond the Scope of Authorized Practice.

An LLLT has an affirmative duty under APR 28(F) to inform clients when issues arise that are beyond the authorized scope of the LLLT's practice. When an affirmative duty under APR 28(F) arises, then the LLLT shall inform the client in writing that:

1. the issue may exist, describing in general terms the nature of the issue;

2. the LLLT is not authorized to advise or assist on this issue;

3. the failure to obtain a lawyer's advice could be adverse to the client's interests; and

4. the client should consult with a lawyer to obtain appropriate advice and documents necessary to protect the client's interests.

After an issue beyond the LLLT's scope of practice has been identified, if the client engages a lawyer with respect to the issue, then an LLLT may prepare a document related to the issue only if a lawyer acting on behalf of the client has provided appropriate documents and written instructions for the LLLT as to whether and how to proceed with respect to the issue. If the client does not engage a lawyer with respect to the issue, then the LLLT may prepare documents that relate to the issue if

the client informs the LLLT how the issue is to be determined and instructs the LLLT how to complete the relevant portions of the document, and

above the LLLT’s signature at the end of the document, the LLLT inserts a statement to the effect that the LLLT did not advise the client with respect to any issue outside of the LLLT’s scope of practice and completed any portions of the document with respect to any such issues at the direction of the client.

B. Domestic Relations.

1. Domestic Relations, Defined. For the purposes of these Regulations, domestic relations shall include only the following actions: (a) divorce and dissolution, (b) parenting and support, (c) parentage or paternity, (d) child support modification, (e) parenting plan modification, (f) domestic violence protection orders, (g) committed intimate relationships only as they pertain to parenting and support issues, (h) legal separation, (i) agreed or default minor guardianships or guardianships arising out of a familial relationship, (j) other protection or restraining orders arising from a domestic relations case, and (k) relocation.

2. Scope of Practice for LLLT’s—Domestic Relations. LLLTs licensed in domestic
relations may render legal services to clients as provided in APR 28(F) and this regulation, except as prohibited by APR 28(H) and Regulation 2(B).

(a) Unless an issue beyond the scope arises or a prohibited act would be required, LLLTs may advise and assist clients with initiating and responding to actions and related motions, discovery, trial preparation, temporary and final orders, and modifications of orders.

(b) LLLT legal services regarding the division of real property shall be limited to matters where the real property is a single family residential dwelling with owner equity less than or equal to twice the homestead exemption (see RCW 6.13.030). LLLTs shall use the form for real property division as approved by the LLLT Board.

(c) LLLTs may advise as to the allocation of retirement assets for defined contribution plans with a value less than the homestead exemption, and as provided in United States Internal Revenue Code (IRC) sections 401a; 401k; 403b; 457; and Individual Retirement Accounts as set forth in IRC section 408.

(d) LLLTs may include language in a decree of dissolution awarding retirement assets as described in APR 28 Regulation 2(B)(2)(c) when the respondent defaults, when the parties agree on the award, or when the court awards the assets following trial. The award language in the decree shall identify (1) the party responsible for having the qualified domestic relations order (QDRO) or supplemental order prepared and by whom, (2) how the cost of the QDRO or supplemental order preparation is to be paid, (3) by what date the QDRO or supplemental order must be prepared, and (4) the remedy for failure to follow through with preparation of the QDRO or supplemental order.

(e) LLLTs may prepare paper work and accompany and assist clients in dispute resolution proceedings including mediation, arbitration, and settlement conferences where not prohibited by the rules and procedures of the forum.

(f) LLLTs, when accompanying their clients, may assist and confer with their pro se clients at depositions.

(g) LLLTs may present to a court agreed orders, uncontested orders, default orders, and accompanying documents.

(h) LLLTs, when accompanying their clients, may assist and confer with their pro se clients and respond to direct questions from the court or tribunal regarding factual and procedural issues at the hearings listed below:

i. domestic violence protection orders and other protection or restraining orders arising from a domestic relations case;

ii. motions for temporary orders, including but not limited to temporary parenting plans, child support, maintenance, and orders to show cause;

iii. enforcement of domestic relations orders;

iv. administrative child support;

v. modification of child support;

vi. adequate cause hearings for parenting plan modifications;
vii. reconsiderations or revisions;

viii. trial setting calendar proceedings with or without the client when the LLLT has confirmed the available dates of the client in writing in advance of the proceeding;

ix. agreed or default minor guardianships or guardianships arising out of a familial relationship.

3. Prohibited Acts. In addition to the prohibitions set forth in APR 28(H), in the course of rendering legal services to clients or prospective clients, LLLTs licensed to practice in domestic relations:

a. shall not render legal services to more than one party in any domestic relations matter;

b. shall not render legal services in:

i. defacto parentage actions;


iii. division or conveyance of formal business entities, commercial property, or residential real property except as permitted by Regulation 2(B);

iv. preparation of QDROs and supplemental orders dividing retirement assets beyond what is prescribed in Regulation 2(B)(2)(d);

v. any retirement assets whereby the decree effectuates the division or the implementation of the division of the asset;

vi. bankruptcy, including obtaining a stay from bankruptcy;

vii. disposition of debts and assets, if one party is in bankruptcy or files a bankruptcy during the pendency of the proceeding, unless: (a) the LLLT's client has retained a lawyer to represent him/her in the bankruptcy, (b) the client has consulted with a lawyer and the lawyer has provided written instructions for the LLLT as to whether and how to proceed regarding the division of debts and assets in the domestic relations proceeding, or (c) the bankruptcy has been discharged;

viii. property issues in committed intimate relationship actions;

ix. major parenting plan modifications beyond the adequate cause hearing unless the terms are agreed to by the parties or one party defaults;

x. the determination of Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act issues under chapter 26.27 RCW or Uniform Interstate Family Support Act issues under chapter 26.21A RCW unless and until jurisdiction has been resolved;

xi. objections or responses in contested relocation actions; and

xii. final revised parenting plans in relocation actions except in the event of default or where the terms have been agreed to by the parties.
An applicant for admission as an LLLT shall satisfy the following education requirements:

A. Core Curriculum.

1. Credit Requirements. An applicant for licensure shall have earned 45 credit hours as required by APR 3. The core curriculum must include the following required subject matters with minimum credit hours earned as indicated:

   1. Civil Procedure, minimum 8 credit hours;
   2. Contracts, minimum 3 credit hours;
   3. Interviewing and Investigation Techniques, minimum 3 credit hours;
   4. Introduction to Law and Legal Process, minimum 3 credit hours;
   5. Law Office Procedures and Technology, minimum 3 credit hours;
   6. Legal Research, Writing and Analysis, minimum 8 credit hours; and
   7. Professional Responsibility, minimum 3 credit hours.

The core curriculum courses in which credit for the foregoing subject matters is earned shall satisfy the curricular requirements approved by the LLLT Board and published by the Bar. If the required courses completed by the applicant do not total 45 credit hours, then the applicant may earn the remaining credit hours by taking legal or paralegal elective courses. All core curriculum course credit hours must be earned at an ABA approved law school, an educational institution with an ABA approved paralegal program, or at an educational institution with an LLLT core curriculum program approved by the LLLT Board under the Washington State LLLT Educational Program Approval Standards.

For purposes of satisfying APR 3(e)(2), one credit hour shall be equivalent to 450 minutes of instruction.

2. LLLT Educational Program Approval Requirements for Programs Not Approved by the ABA. The LLLT Board shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining standards, to be published by the Association, for approving LLLT educational programs that are not otherwise approved by the ABA. Educational programs complying with the LLLT Board’s standards shall be approved by the LLLT Board and qualified to teach the LLLT core curriculum.

B. Practice Area Curriculum. An applicant for licensure in a defined practice area shall have completed the prescribed curriculum and earned course credits for that defined practice area, as set forth below and in APR 3(e). Each practice area curriculum course shall satisfy the curricular requirements approved by the LLLT Board and published by the Bar.

   1. Domestic Relations.

      a. [RESERVED.]

      b. Credit Requirements: Applicants shall complete 5 credit hours in basic domestic
relations subjects and 10 credit hours in advanced and Washington specific domestic relations subjects.

C. Required Supplemental Education. The LLLT Board has discretion to require all LLLTs to complete supplemental education in order to maintain their licenses due to changes in the permitted scope of practice for LLLTs. The LLLT Board shall provide notice to LLLTs of the supplemental education requirement and the deadline for completion of the requirement, allowing at least 12 months to complete the required supplemental education. LLLTs may be administratively suspended pursuant to the procedures set forth in APR 17 if they fail to comply with the supplemental education requirements by the stated deadline.

REGULATION 4. LIMITED TIME WAIVERS

A. Limited Time Waiver, Defined. The LLLT Board shall grant a waiver of the minimum associate-level degree requirement and/or the core curriculum education requirement set forth in APR 3 if an applicant meets the requirements set forth in Regulation 4(B). The LLLT Board shall not waive the practice area curriculum requirement. The limited time waiver application will be separate from the application process for admission.

B. Waiver Requirements and Applications. To qualify for the limited time waiver, an applicant shall pay the required fee, submit the required waiver application form and, provide proof, in such form and manner as the Bar requires, that they have:

1. Passed an LLLT Board approved national paralegal certification examination;

2. Active certification from an LLLT Board approved national paralegal certification organization; and

3. Completed 10 years of substantive law-related experience supervised by a licensed lawyer within the 15 years preceding the application for the waiver. Proof of 10 years of substantive-law related experience supervised by a licensed lawyer shall include the following:

a. the name and bar number of the supervising lawyer(s),

b. certification by the lawyer that the work experience meets the definition of substantive law-related work experience as defined in APR 28, and

c. the dates of employment or service.

C. Review of Limited Time Waiver Application. The Bar shall review each limited time waiver application to determine if the application meets the waiver requirements. Any application that does not meet the limited time waiver requirements as established by this Regulation shall be denied by the Bar on administrative grounds, with a written statement of the reason(s) for denial.

D. Review of Denial. An applicant whose application for waiver has been denied by the Bar may request review by the LLLT Board chair. Such request shall be filed with the Bar within 14 days of the date of the notification of denial. The applicant shall be provided with written notification of the chair's decision, which is not subject to review.

E. Expiration of Limited Time Waiver Approval. Approval of the limited time waiver application shall expire July 31, 2022.
REGULATION 9.  Substantive Law-Related Work Experience Requirement

Each applicant for licensure as a limited license legal technician shall show proof of having completed 1,500 hours of substantive law-related work experience supervised by a licensed lawyer as required by APR 5(c). The experience requirement shall be completed no more than three years before and 40 months after the date of the LLLT practice area examination that the applicant passed and must be completed by July 31, 2023. The proof shall be provided in such form as the Bar requires, but shall include at a minimum:

1. the name and bar number of the supervising lawyer;

2. certification that the work experience meets the definition of substantive law-related work experience as defined in APR 28;

3. the total number of hours of substantive law-related work experience performed under the supervising lawyer; and

4. certification that the requisite work experience was acquired within the time period required by this regulation.

REGULATION 10.  [Reserved.]

[Adopted effective August 20, 2013; Amended effective September 3, 2013; March 31, 2015; June 21, 2016; November 22, 2016; September 1, 2017; June 4, 2019; September 1, 2021; June 28, 2022; January 1, 2023; January 23, 2024.]