

Highlights

2004 Annual Report of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission filed with the Supreme Court on April 27, 2005

Registration

- 78,101 lawyers were registered as of October 31, 2004, reflecting a 1.85% increase since 2003, but below 2.9% average annual growth during 1990s.
- Slower growth in lawyer population was due primarily to increases in lawyers removed from roll due to failure to register, retirement, death or discipline rather than sustained reduction in new admissions.

Investigations

- ARDC docketed 6,070 investigations involving 4,112 Illinois lawyers (about 5% of registered lawyers) and concluded 6,315 investigations, approximately 6% of which were made part of formal charges.

Hearing Board Activity

- The Administrator filed a record number 147 formal complaints, continuing a trend of increased new filings since 2001.
- The Hearing Board concluded a record number 170 cases, more than 22% over the previous high, with additional adjudication staffing provided by the Commission.

Review Board Activity

- The Review Board kept pace with record number 45 appeals filed by concluding 37% more cases than in 2003.

Disciplinary Sanctions

- The Supreme Court imposed a record number 149 sanctions (65 by consent).

New Rules

- The Supreme Court required that lawyers disclose in registration whether they carry malpractice coverage, information that is reported on the ARDC web site.
- Trust account reporting in annual registration is deemed confidential.

Commission Web Site

- ARDC launches searchable database of public disciplinary decisions.

Client Protection Program

- Since its inception in 1994, the Client Protection Program has paid \$3,897,070 to reimburse 1,016 victims, providing partial recourse to those who lost money due to the dishonest conduct of disciplined attorneys.
- The Program docketed a record number 357 claims and paid a record number 153 awards totaling \$620,023, but funding restraints precluded reimbursement of actual losses totaling \$3,413,793.

Financial Report

- ARDC experienced a \$2.9 million shortfall in projected revenues from 2001 to 2004 (due to slower growth in registration fee revenues and lower interest rates) and maintained spending within projections notwithstanding financial pressures of a record disciplinary and Client Protection Program caseload.
- ARDC projects that the present fee structure will support operations through 2006 and studies recommendations to address funding issues.