

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024  
HIGHLIGHTS



ARDC  
ATTORNEY REGISTRATION &  
DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

# MISSION

ARDC preserves and advances the integrity of the legal profession through attorney registration and education, public outreach, restorative services, and when necessary, attorney discipline

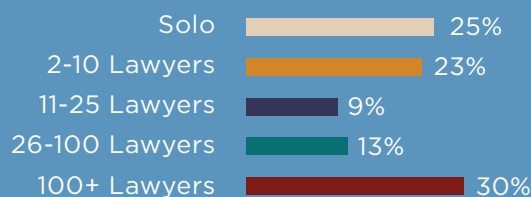
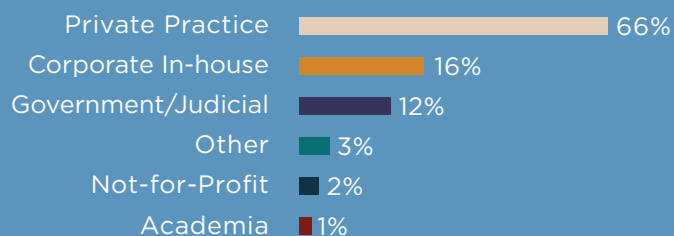
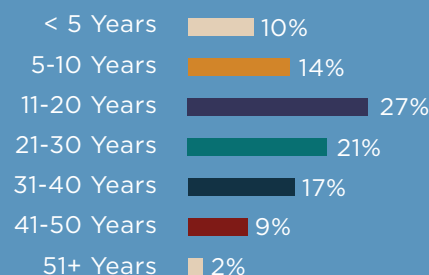
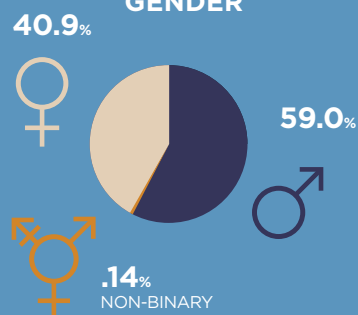
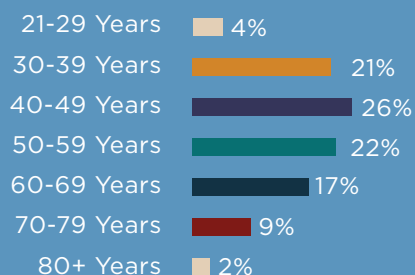
# VISION

ARDC'S vision is to shape a profession where all lawyers act ethically and with integrity.

# VALUES

- 1. Pioneer Excellence, Set the Standard**—Leading in innovation and excellence by implementing best practices and setting new standards. Together, we drive standards that others aspire to and we reach the highest levels of performance as individuals and as an organization.
- 2. Show Empathy in Every Step**—Listening, understanding, and showing compassion in all interactions. We value the perspectives of others and foster a supportive and inclusive environment.
- 3. Stay Curious, Stay Open**—Asking questions and embracing new ideas and diverse perspectives in all we do. By remaining open-minded, we adapt to change and continuously improve.
- 4. Own It, Be Accountable**—Taking ownership of our actions, decisions, and commitments, while holding ourselves to high performance and behavioral standards. We deliver on promises with integrity, transparency, and timeliness, ensuring consistency in both what we do and how we do it.

• **96,821** registered lawyers • **84,694** are active status • **12,127** are inactive status  
• **65,456** or **68%** located in Illinois • **31,365** or **32%** located outside Illinois



## 49,579 LAWYERS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

**87%** carry malpractice insurance

**85%** maintain a trust account

40% have a succession plan

**56,059** or **86%** of lawyers  
in Illinois practice in six counties

Cook (46,907)

DuPage (4,468)

Lake (3,078)

Kane (1,135)

Will (1,058)

McHenry (548)

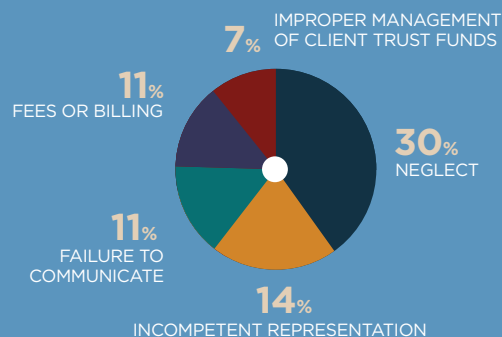


# REGULATORY ACTION

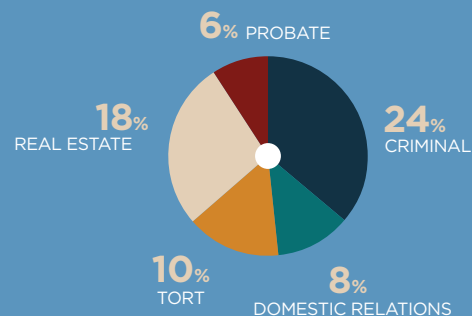
## INVESTIGATIONS

**4,706** grievances against **3,352** lawyers representing **3.5%** of all registered lawyers.

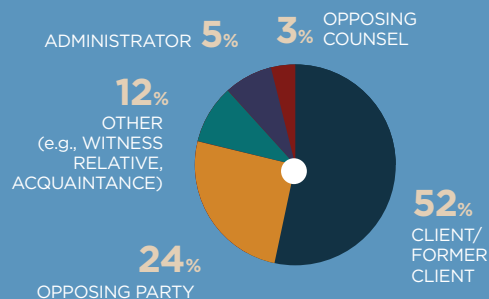
### TOP FIVE ALLEGATIONS



### TOP FIVE PRACTICE AREAS



### TOP FIVE COMPLAINANTS



## PROSECUTIONS

**46** formal disciplinary complaints filed in 2024 before the Hearing Board

**33** disciplinary and regulatory proceedings filed directly with the Illinois Supreme Court in 2024 including motions for disbarment on consent, petitions for reciprocal discipline, petitions for interim suspension, and petitions for permanent retirement

**70%** of formal disciplinary complaints charged fraudulent or deceptive activity in connection with alleged criminal conduct, misrepresentation to clients, a tribunal or others, or the conversion of trust funds

**61%** of formal disciplinary complaints were filed against lawyers more than 20 years in practice

**33%** of formal disciplinary complaints arose out of the lawyer's criminal conduct or conviction

**39** cases were concluded by the Hearing Board in 2024

**18** cases were closed without hearing by the filing of discipline on consent

**13** cases were concluded after a contested hearing

**4** cases were concluded by a default hearing

**3** cases were voluntarily dismissed before hearing

**1** case was concluded by the imposition of a Board reprimand

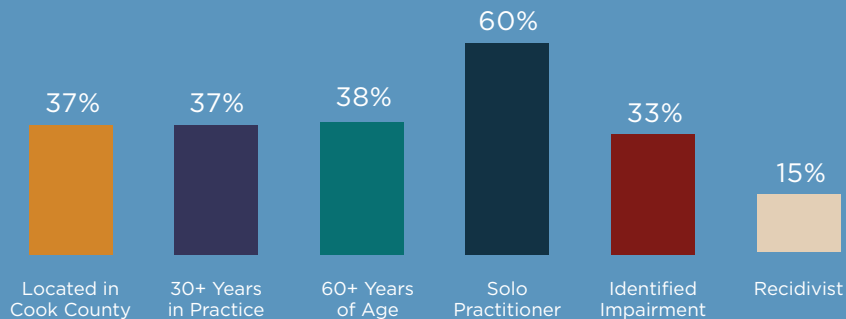


# DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

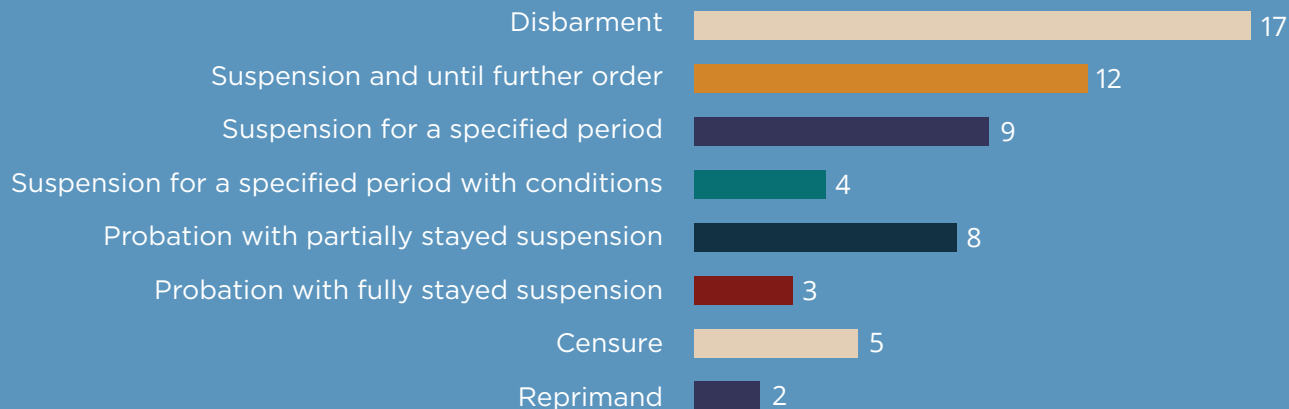
60 sanctions entered by the Illinois Supreme Court against 60 lawyers

- 35% of sanctions entered were discipline on consent
- 22% of sanctions entered were reciprocal to sanctions entered by another jurisdiction
- 48% of sanctions were either disbarment or suspension until further order of the Court

## LAWYERS SANCTIONED IN 2024



## DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS ORDERED BY THE SUPREME COURT IN 2024



## TYPE OF MISCONDUCT

**68%** Conduct involving dishonesty, deceit or intentional misrepresentation in violation of Rule 8.4(c)

**32%** Criminal conduct or conviction in violation of Rule 8.4(b)

**22%** Mishandled or misappropriated trust funds in violation of Rule 1.15.

# EDUCATION & PROACTIVE INITIATIVES



## **ARDC CLE ON-LINE LEARNING**

As a premier CLE provider in Illinois, the ARDC offers free MCLE-accredited webcasts to support Illinois lawyers seeking relevant, efficient, and impactful educational programming and resources.

**45** on-demand CLE learning courses available in 2024 offering 32 hours free Illinois professional responsibility credit

**94,233** CLE certificates issued in 2024

**74,344.5** hours in professional responsibility CLE earned in 2024

## **PMBR—PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT-BASED LEARNING**

The PMBR course is a four-hour interactive, law office management self-assessment course. Lawyers in private practice with-

out malpractice insurance are required to complete the course every two years, however, the course and any of its components is open to all lawyers.

**6,964** lawyers required to take the 2024-2025 PMBR course to be registered for 2025.

## **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

An important part of the ARDC's outreach efforts and as a service to the Illinois bar, the ARDC offers experienced presenters to speak to lawyer and citizen groups at no charge.

**140** speeches made by ARDC lawyers in 2024 at CLE seminars for bar associations, government agencies, law firms, law schools, public interest groups and other organizations, at no charge.

## **ARDC ETHICS INQUIRY PROGRAM HOTLINE**

The ARDC Ethics Inquiry Program offers free assistance and guidance to Illinois lawyers about hypothetical questions concerning a lawyer's ethical duties under the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct.

**2,211** calls received in 2024 from lawyers, providing research assistance and guidance regarding ethics issues and the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct, free of charge.

## **ON-LINE PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES**

The ARDC provides various resources on its website to promote ethical practices, inform and provide guidance to Illinois lawyers about their obligations. These

include alerts, e-blasts, newsletters, and articles on legal ethics, emerging trends, regulation changes, and specific issues like handling trust funds, law practice transitions, and professional conduct.

## **ARDC WEBSITE**

The ARDC website ([www.iardc.org](http://www.iardc.org)) is a key resource for the public and legal profession in Illinois, with over 1.4 million visits annually. It features a Lawyer Search function for accessing lawyers' credentials and contact information, handles registration for over 96,000 lawyers, and provides updates, educational resources, and CLE programming.

# RESTORATIVE SERVICES

## PROBATION, DIVERSION AND LAWYER WELL-BEING PROGRAM

The ARDC Probation and Lawyer Deferral Services Department oversees lawyers who must fulfill specific conditions in order to practice law. The ARDC employs practical and inventive strategies to proactively tackle the root causes of lawyer misconduct, particularly when it stems from mental health, addiction, or law office management issues. This includes mandatory education, mentoring, testing, treatment via the Lawyers' Assistance Program (LAP), and financial audits. By addressing these issues early, the ARDC seeks to promote ethical and effective legal practice.

**202** lawyers were required to fulfill certain conditions in order to practice law or as part of a disciplinary sanction.

<b>75</b> Reciprocal discipline	<b>30</b> Diversion
<b>43</b> Suspension pending restitution	<b>4</b> Conditional Reinstatement
<b>25</b> Probation	<b>1</b> Conditional Admission
<b>24</b> Supervision/108	

**84** lawyers were required to fulfill requirements arising out of substance or mental illness impairments, law office management issues or both

- **31** lawyers were monitored for substance abuse or mental health conditions
- **23** lawyers were monitored for law office management or ethics training
- **23** lawyers were monitored for both
- **7** lawyers were monitored for other requirements such as making restitution or issuing a letter of apology

**32** lawyers were required to submit to random drug and alcohol testing

## REFERRALS TO LAWYERS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LAP)

The ARDC can refer lawyers to the Illinois Lawyers' Assistance Program (LAP) under Supreme Court Rule 766 if there's reason to believe they are impaired by substance abuse or mental health issues. This includes cases involving DUI, other criminal cases, or failure to respond in investigations.

**28** lawyers were referred to LAP under Supreme Court Rule 766 during a confidential investigation due to suspected substance abuse or mental health issues.

## INTERMEDIARY PROGRAM

Independent lawyers, experienced with impaired lawyers, are hired as intermediaries to contact unresponsive lawyers during investigations. They operate independently of the Administrator, and their communications are privileged under Rules 1.6(d) and 8.3(c). The goal is to reduce unresponsiveness, provide needed assistance, and save ARDC resources.

**15** lawyers contacted successfully by intermediaries

## PERMANENT RETIREMENT

Under Supreme Court Rule 756(a)(8), lawyers facing minor misconduct charges can petition for permanent retirement with no chance of reinstatement. This non-disciplinary option allows them to retire while maintaining their dignity and reputation.

**2** lawyers were transferred to permanent retirement status



# RESTORATIVE SERVICES

## RECEIVERSHIPS

Supreme Court Rule 776 allows for appointing a receiver to manage a lawyer's files and close their practice if they die, become disabled, or disappear, and no responsible party is available. The ARDC supports those closing a lawyer's practice, often due to the lawyer's death, and assists court-appointed receivers. If no one else can, the ARDC seeks to be the receiver to protect clients' interests.

**13** investigations in 2024 for possible receivership of a lawyer's law practice  
**7** pending receiverships in 2024: **3** cases where the ARDC is the receiver and **4** cases where the ARDC assists the appointed receiver.

## CLIENT PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Client Protection Program under Supreme Court Rule 780 reimburses clients for losses caused by dishonest conduct of Illinois lawyers or involving unearned, unrefunded fees paid to Illinois lawyers who later died or were transferred to disability inactive status. With a maximum award limit of \$100,000 per claim and \$1 million per lawyer, the program does not cover losses from negligence, malpractice, or fee disputes.

**\$1,442,273** paid on **65** approved claims involving **22** different lawyers  
**54%** of approved claims involved the misappropriation of client funds  
**29%** of approved claims arose out of a tort representation  
**61** of approved claims below the \$100,000 maximum were paid the full eligible amount of the claimed loss  
**16** of approved claims paid out \$2,500 or less  
**4** of approved claims were for the \$100,000 maximum per-award limit







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The Full 2024  
ARDC Annual Report