



ARDC



ATTORNEY
REGISTRATION
& DISCIPLINARY
COMMISSION

2013 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



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ARDC Annual Report

Mission Statement



As an administrative agency of the Supreme Court of Illinois, the ARDC assists the Court in **regulating** the legal profession through attorney registration, education, investigation, prosecution and remedial action.

Through our annual **registration** process, we compile a list of lawyers authorized to practice law. We provide ready access to that list so that the public, the profession and courts may access lawyers' credentials and contact information.

We **educate** lawyers through seminars and publications to help them serve their clients effectively and professionally within the bounds of the rules of conduct adopted by the Court. We provide guidance to lawyers and to the public on ethics issues through our confidential Ethics Inquiry telephone service.

The ARDC handles **discipline** matters fairly and promptly, balancing the rights of the lawyers involved and the protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession. Grievances are investigated confidentially. Disciplinary prosecutions are adjudicated publicly and result in recommendations to the Court for disposition. Our boards consist of independent, diverse groups of volunteer lawyers and non-lawyers who make recommendations in disciplinary matters.

We advocate for **restitution** and other remedial action in disciplinary matters. We seek to provide reimbursements through our Client Protection Program to those whose funds have been taken dishonestly by Illinois lawyers who have been disciplined.

The Illinois Supreme Court has original and exclusive jurisdiction to regulate the admission and discipline of lawyers in Illinois. Since 1973, administrative responsibility for the registration and discipline of Illinois lawyers has been delegated by the Illinois Supreme Court to the ARDC. The ARDC assists the Court in regulating the legal profession through attorney registration, education, investigation, prosecution and remedial action.

2013 Lawyer Population



Through the annual registration process, the ARDC prepares and maintains the Master Roll of Attorneys, consisting of the names of lawyers authorized to practice law.

91,083 Illinois lawyers appeared on the Master Roll of Attorneys as of October 31, 2013

37% of Illinois lawyers are female and **63%** are male

64,710 lawyers (**71%**) reported a principal address in Illinois

45,306 lawyers or almost **50%** of all lawyers are located in Cook County

26,373 lawyers (**29%**) reported an address outside Illinois, a **9.5%** increase from 2012

52% of lawyers reported that they have malpractice insurance

80% of lawyers in private practice reported that they or their law firm maintained a trust account

30,751 Illinois lawyers reported that they had provided more than **2,098,472** hours of *pro bono* legal services

16,266 Illinois lawyers reported **\$14,017,816** in monetary contributions to *pro bono* legal services organizations

Education and Public Outreach

A significant part of the ARDC's activities is the education of Illinois lawyers and the public through seminars, publications and outreach on the ethical duties of lawyers. Education and outreach efforts are vital tools in the ARDC's efforts to help lawyers serve their clients effectively and professionally, avoid potential harm to clients and minimize possible grievances later. Those efforts include:

Speaking Engagements

ARDC personnel made over **270** presentations to bar associations, government agencies, law firms, law schools, public interest groups and other organizations in 2013, a **23%** increase from the year before.

MCLE Accredited Seminars

The ARDC also produced several Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) accredited webcasts posted on the agency's website. More than **77,000** hours of ethics and professionalism MCLE credit were earned at no cost in 2013.

Ethics Inquiry Program

The ARDC Ethics Inquiry Program, a telephone inquiry resource, continued to serve attorneys seeking help in resolving hypothetical, ethical dilemmas. In 2013, staff lawyers responded to **4,613** ethics inquiries. Questions about a lawyer's obligation to report the misconduct of another attorney was the most frequent area of inquiry.

ARDC Website

The ARDC website continues to be a leading online resource for public information concerning all aspects of lawyer regulation. The site attracts an average of **111,000** visits each month and, during 2013, the total number of visits exceeded **1.3** million. Last year, approximately **81%** of all Illinois lawyers utilized the online registration program, a significant increase over the 37% who used online registration in 2009, the first year that the program

was available. The agency regularly posts important ethics and professionalism updates on the website and also sends email alerts to members of the Illinois bar regarding events that impact on a lawyer's ethical duties.

Assistance to the Public

ARDC staff paralegals provided assistance to nearly **15,000** people in 2013 seeking help, including information about specific lawyers and ARDC procedures.



Grievances and Formal Disciplinary Charges in 2013

The ARDC handles discipline matters fairly and promptly, balancing the rights of the lawyers involved and the protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession. Grievances are investigated confidentially. Disciplinary prosecutions are adjudicated publicly and result in recommendations to the Court for disposition. Our boards consist of independent, diverse groups of volunteer lawyers and non-lawyers who make recommendations in disciplinary matters.

6,073 grievances were docketed against 4,041 different attorneys, representing about 4% of all registered attorneys

57% of all grievances involved issues of poor attorney-client relations: neglect of a client matter (40% of all grievances) or failure to communicate with a client (18% of all grievances)

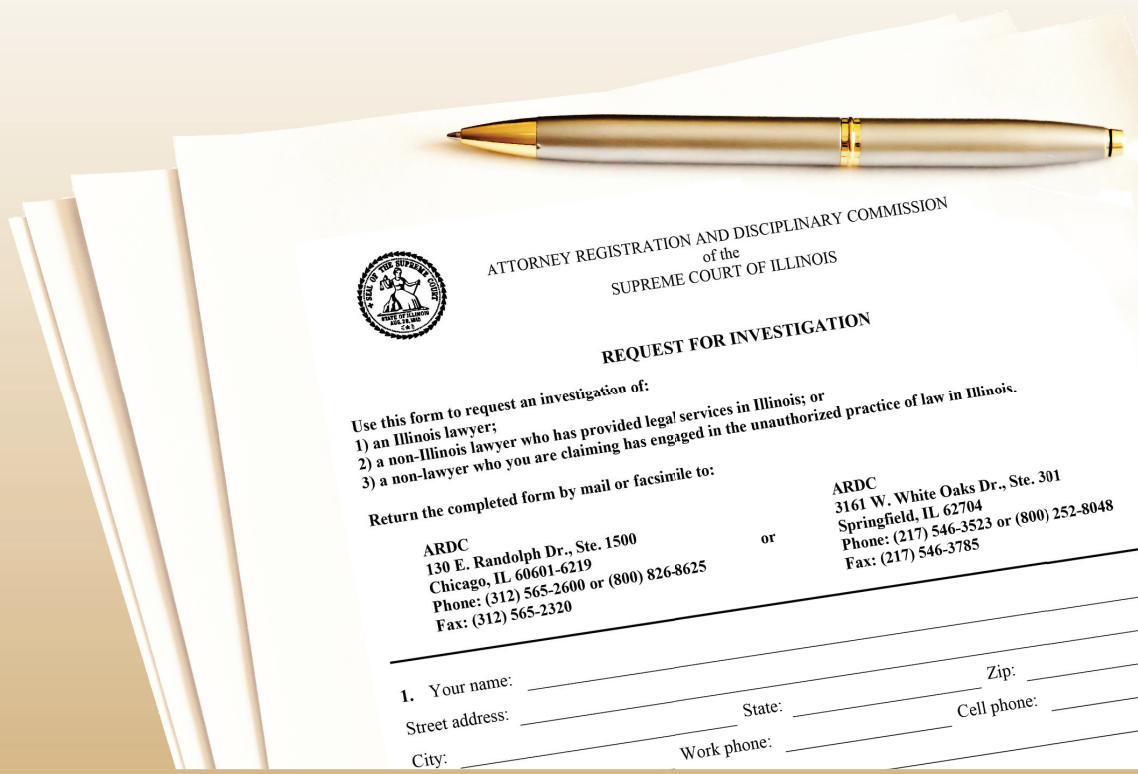
Top practice areas likely to attract a grievance include criminal law, domestic relations, real estate, and tort

3% of all grievances resulted in the filing of formal disciplinary charges

83 formal disciplinary complaints were filed

77% alleged fraudulent or deceptive activity typically alleged in conjunction with other charges such as neglect, improper trust account management or criminal conduct

33.3% of all formal complaints voted in 2013 were the result of attorney reports (aka "Himmel" report)



ATTORNEY REGISTRATION AND DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION
of the
SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Use this form to request an investigation of:

- 1) an Illinois lawyer;
- 2) a non-Illinois lawyer who has provided legal services in Illinois; or
- 3) a non-lawyer who you are claiming has engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in Illinois.

Return the completed form by mail or facsimile to:

ARDC
130 E. Randolph Dr., Ste. 1500
Chicago, IL 60601-6219
Phone: (312) 565-2600 or (800) 826-8625
Fax: (312) 565-2320

or

ARDC
3161 W. White Oaks Dr., Ste. 301
Springfield, IL 62704
Phone: (217) 546-3523 or (800) 252-8048
Fax: (217) 546-3785

1. Your name: _____ Zip: _____
Street address: _____ State: _____
City: _____ Work phone: _____ Cell phone: _____



Disciplinary Sanctions

The Supreme Court has sole authority to sanction attorneys for misconduct, except for a reprimand, which can be imposed in a disciplinary case without order of the Court by either the Hearing or Review Board.

IN 2013:

149 sanctions were entered by the Court against **148** lawyers (*one lawyer was disciplined twice in 2013*)

6 lawyers were reprimanded by either the Hearing Board or Review Board

13 lawyers were suspended on an emergency basis by the Court

44% of disciplined lawyers were Cook County practitioners

25% of sanctioned lawyers had one or more identified substance abuse or mental impairment issues

65% of sanctioned lawyers were sole practitioners



Client Protection Program

The Supreme Court of Illinois created the Client Protection Program in 1994 to reimburse clients who lost money as the result of the dishonest conduct of an Illinois lawyer and cannot recover from the lawyer or from other sources. The Client Protection Program is funded by an annual assessment paid by every active registered lawyer and remitted to the Client Protection Program Trust Fund. The maximum award available for claimants currently is \$100,000 per claim and \$1,000,000 per lawyer.

IN 2013:

247 claims approved against **38** lawyers and a record **\$2,016,669** in payouts

72% of approved claims involved fraud and accounted for **59%** of payouts

172 approved claims involving one disbarred lawyer who acted as “escrow attorney” for a fraudulent investment scheme



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