

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

HIGHLIGHTS



The Full 2025
ARDC Annual Report

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.

values

- 1. 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.
- 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. 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.

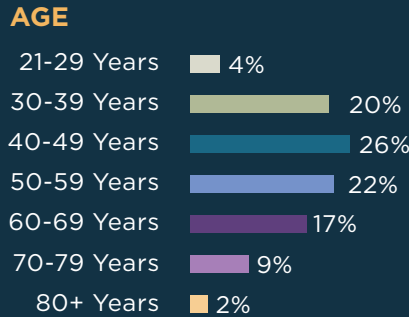
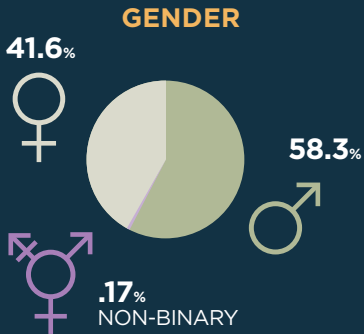
vision

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

ILLINOIS lawyers

Illinois is home to the fifth-largest lawyer population in the U.S. With nearly 97,000 registered lawyers, most remain active in the profession, and a significant majority live or practice within Illinois, many located in the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. The following statistics reflect the wide range of ages, genders, years in practice, and practice settings of Illinois lawyers, offering a snapshot of the steadily evolving Illinois legal profession.

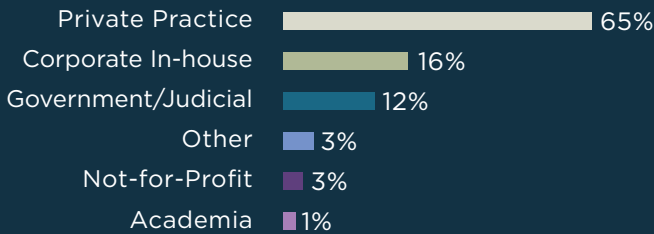
- **96,997** registered lawyers • **85,068** are active status • **11,929** are inactive status
- **65,608** or **68%** located in Illinois • **31,389** or **32%** located outside Illinois



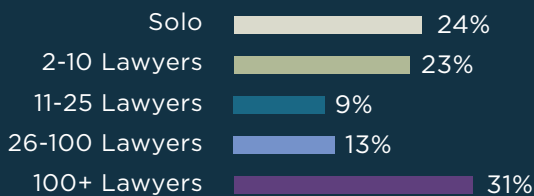
49,667 LAWYERS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

- 88%** carry malpractice insurance
- 85%** maintain a trust account
- 40%** have a succession plan

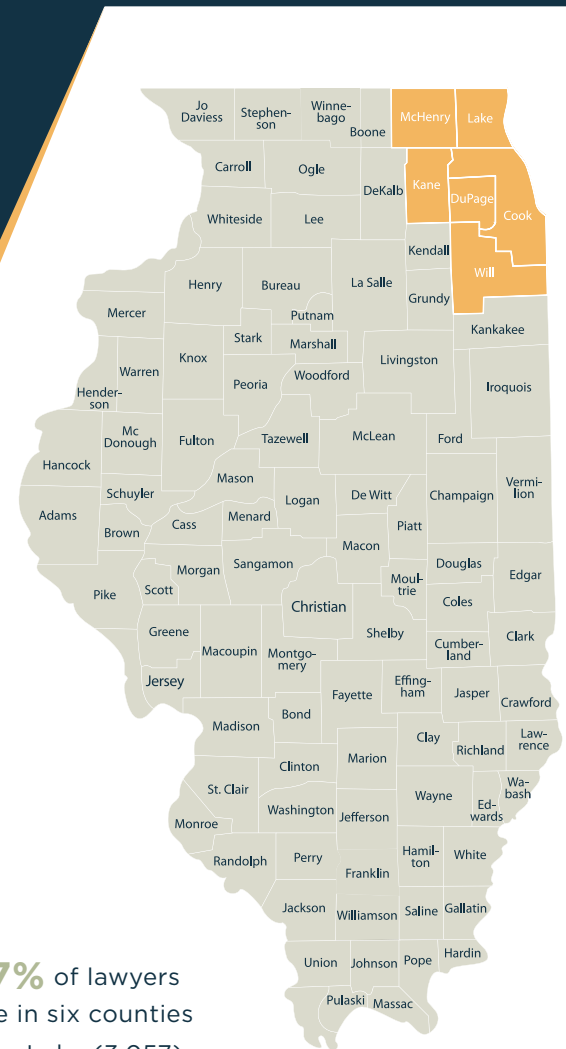
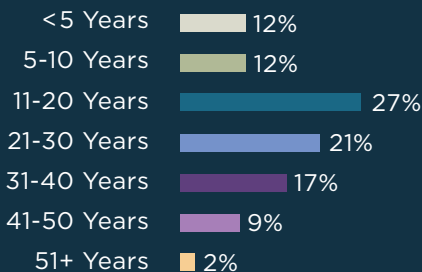
PRACTICE SETTING



LAWYERS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE



YEARS IN PRACTICE



57,388 or **87%** of lawyers in Illinois practice in six counties

Cook (47,089)	Lake (3,057)
DuPage (4,507)	McHenry (530)
Kane (1,131)	Will (1,074)

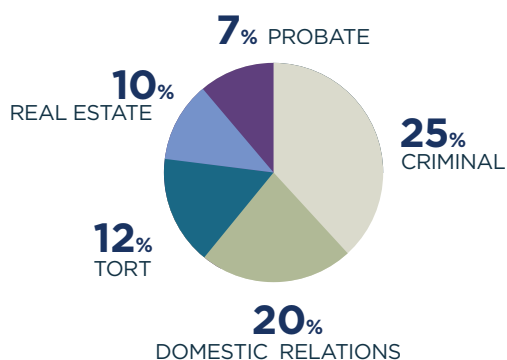
2025 REGULATORY action

A central part of the ARDC's mission is to uphold the integrity of the legal profession. Our revised mission, vision, and values reflect a balanced approach to attorney regulation, one that prioritizes proactive, educational, and restorative services while maintaining a firm commitment to ensuring the highest standards of professional conduct. Discipline remains an essential tool, but it is used judiciously, reserved for circumstances where it is necessary to protect the public and preserve trust in the profession. Each year, the ARDC's investigative and prosecutorial work plays a critical role in fulfilling that mission. The following data highlights the scope and impact of that work in 2025.

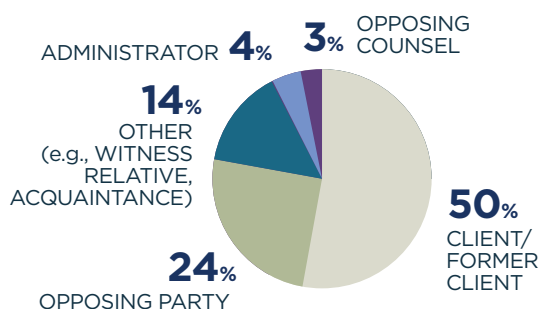
5,586 grievances involving **3,964** lawyers representing **4%** of all registered lawyers.

INVESTIGATIONS

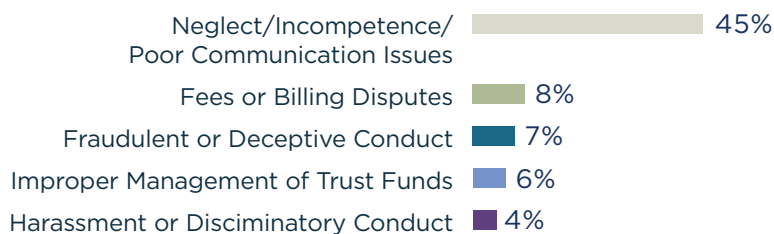
TOP FIVE PRACTICE AREAS



TOP FIVE COMPLAINANTS



TOP FIVE ALLEGATIONS



PROSECUTIONS

48 formal disciplinary complaints filed before the Hearing Board in 2025

31 disciplinary and regulatory proceedings filed directly with the Illinois Supreme Court in 2025, including:

- Disbarment on consent
- Reciprocal discipline
- Interim suspension
- Permanent retirement

TOP AREAS OF MISCONDUCT

65% involved dishonesty, deceit, or intentional misrepresentation (Rule 8.4(c))

31% involved criminal conduct or conviction (Rule 8.4(b))

31% involved improper management of trust funds (Rule 1.15)

DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

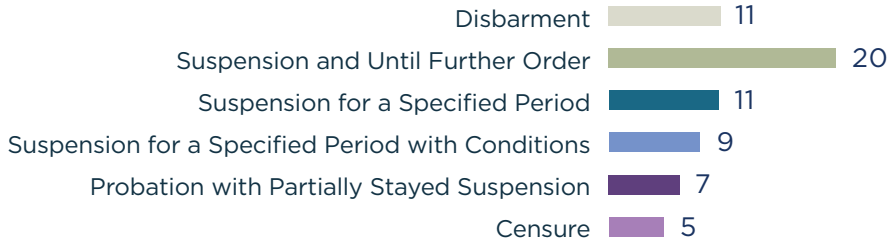
51% of cases were closed without a hearing through discipline on consent

46% of respondent lawyers appeared pro se

14% of respondent lawyers failed to participate in the proceedings

2025 DISCIPLINARY sanctions

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS ORDERED BY THE SUPREME COURT IN 2025



DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

63 sanctions entered by the Illinois Supreme Court

49% of sanctions were either disbarment or suspension until further order of the Court

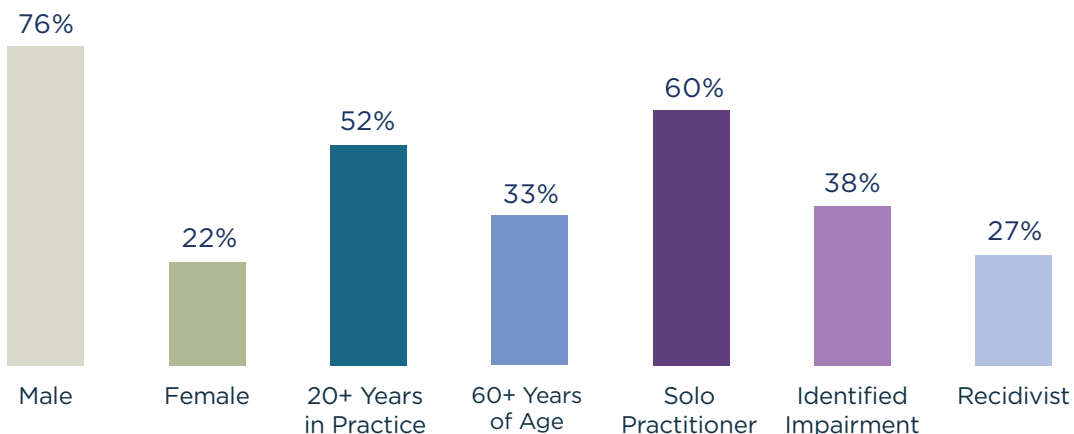
48% of sanctions entered were by discipline on consent

25% of sanctions entered were reciprocal to sanctions entered by another jurisdiction

11% of sanctions ordered suspension stayed in part by probationary conditions



LAWYERS SANCTIONED IN 2025



2025 EDUCATION AND RESTORATIVE SERVICES

The ARDC's mission places a stronger emphasis on proactive education and restorative services, while continuing to safeguard the integrity of the legal profession. Through comprehensive educational initiatives, supportive intervention programs that address the root causes of lawyer misconduct, and client protection services that compensate individuals harmed by dishonest conduct, the ARDC works to strengthen the profession and reinforce public confidence in those who serve it.

education

ARDC CLE ON-LINE LEARNING

The ARDC's extensive, no-cost on-demand learning library underscores its commitment to providing accessible, high quality education that supports Illinois lawyers' CLE compliance and professional development.

IN 2025:

- **49** on demand CLE courses
- **39,705** CLE certificates issued
- **52,469** professional responsibility CLE earned

PMBR - PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT-BASED LEARNING

The PMBR course is an innovative, four hour interactive law office management program designed especially for lawyers in private practice that do not carry malpractice insurance. Open to all lawyers, it empowers lawyers to strengthen their practice management skills.

IN 2025:

- **4,968** private practitioners without malpractice insurance completed the full PMBR course
- **5,000+** additional lawyers voluntarily completed at least one module of the PMBR modules

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. In 2025, **124** speeches were made by ARDC lawyers 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

The ARDC Ethics Inquiry Program offers free, confidential guidance to Illinois lawyers on hypothetical ethics questions. Since 1995, it has assisted nearly **100,000** lawyers. In 2025, **2,224** calls were answered with research based ethics guidance.

ON-LINE PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

The ARDC offers a robust library of online resources that help Illinois lawyers stay ahead of ethics developments, regulatory changes, and evolving best practices. From trust accounting and law-practice transitions to professional conduct guidance and emerging issues, including the 2025 *Illinois Attorney's Guide to Implementing AI*, the ARDC supports lawyers at every stage of their careers

ARDC WEBSITE

The ARDC website (www.iardc.org) is a primary resource for Illinois lawyers and the public, drawing more than **1.3** million visits each year. For the profession, it supports registration for over **97,000** attorneys and provides an efficient way to complete annual registration, request Letters of Good Standing, manage Pro Hac Vice applications, and access useful practice resources. For the public, the Lawyer Search tool enables users to verify a lawyer's licensure and review status information, obtain information about the grievance process, and obtain access to disciplinary filings and Supreme Court orders.

RESTORATIVE services

PROBATION, DIVERSION AND LAWYER WELL-BEING PROGRAM

The ARDC employs practical, forward thinking strategies to proactively address the underlying causes of lawyer misconduct, particularly when challenges involve mental health, substance use, or law office management. Through structured support such as mandatory education, mentoring, drug testing, participation in the Lawyers' Assistance Program (LAP), and financial audits, the ARDC works to intervene early and help lawyers meet their professional obligations. These efforts promote ethical, competent, and sustainable legal practice across Illinois.

PROBATION AND DIVERSION

In 2025, the ARDC monitored **197** lawyers who were required to comply with conditions related to substance use or mental health impairments, law office management issues, or restitution obligations.

IN 2025:

- **70** lawyers were directed to complete activities or programs ordered by the Illinois Supreme Court or required through ARDC diversion agreements or Inquiry Board conditions.
- **42** lawyers were monitored specifically for substance abuse or mental health concerns.

These oversight measures reflect the ARDC's commitment to accountability, rehabilitation, and supporting lawyers in returning to practice responsibly.

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 matters involving DUI, other criminal cases, or failure to respond in investigations. **40** lawyers were referred to LAP in 2025 during a confidential investigation.

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. **7** lawyers were contacted successfully by intermediaries in 2025.

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. In 2025, **4** lawyers were transferred to permanent retirement status.

RECEIVERSHIPS

Supreme Court Rule 776 authorizes the appointment of a receiver to take control of a lawyer's files and wind down their practice when the lawyer has died, becomes disabled, or has disappeared and no responsible party is available to manage the practice. The ARDC routinely supports individuals closing a lawyer's practice, most often following the lawyer's death, and supports court-appointed receivers. When no suitable person is available, the ARDC may seek appointment as receiver to protect clients' interests. In 2025, the ARDC received **11** investigations involving potential receiverships, and **6** receiverships were opened. The ARDC served as receiver in **2** matters and assisted the court-appointed receiver in **4**.

CLIENT PROTECTION program

The Client Protection Program, established under Supreme Court Rule 780, reimburses clients for financial losses resulting from the dishonest conduct of Illinois lawyers, including losses from unearned and unrefunded fees paid to lawyers who later died or were transferred to disability inactive status. The program's maximum award is \$150,000 per claim and \$1.5 million per lawyer. It does not compensate for losses arising from negligence, malpractice, or fee disputes.

IN 2025:

- **\$983,227** was paid on **60** approved claims involving **26** lawyers
- **65%** of approved claims involved the failure to return unearned fees
- **51%** of approved claims arose from criminal representations
- **55** approved claims below the \$150,000 cap were paid the full eligible amount
- **5** approved claims reached the \$150,000 maximum award



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