



# Wisconsin Supreme Court Lawyer Regulation System Office of Lawyer Regulation

## Annual Report

FY 2024-2025

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



**Office of Lawyer Regulation**  
Director Timothy C. Samuelson

**Board of Administrative Oversight**  
Chairperson Rene L'Esperance

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**Wisconsin Capitol**  
photo: Carol M. Highsmith

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“A lawyer, as a member of the legal profession, is a representative of clients, an officer of the legal system and a public citizen having special responsibility for the quality of justice.”

- Wisconsin Supreme Court Rules, Chapter 20, Preamble, Cmt. 1



Genius of Wisconsin  
artist: Helen Farnsworth Mears

## Message from the Board of Administrative Oversight

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as Chairperson of the Wisconsin Board of Administrative Oversight. I am excited to lead this distinguished body entrusted with the critical responsibility of monitoring the fairness, effectiveness, and efficiency of Wisconsin's attorney regulation system.

Our work is foundational to the integrity of the legal profession and, by extension, the public's confidence in the administration of justice. The Supreme Court has delegated to us a vital role: to serve as an independent and engaged oversight body that not only monitors the disciplinary actions imposed by the Court but also proposes substantive and procedural rules for its consideration. In carrying out these duties, we must remain efficient and economical, especially in times of rising costs, ensuring that every action we take reflects both fiscal responsibility and our unwavering commitment to quality oversight.

As Chairperson, I am committed to ensuring the Board remains a strong, independent, and principled component of the attorney regulation system. I look forward to our continued work together in service of the Court, the legal profession, and the people of Wisconsin.

**- Rene L'Esperance - Chairperson, Board of Administrative Oversight**

## Message from the Office of Lawyer Regulation

I am honored to present the Office of Lawyer Regulation's annual report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, which reflects a pivotal year of growth and transformation for our agency. We emphasized outreach, restructured our investigation department, and invested in software to increase operational efficiencies.

We expanded our educational offerings, providing Wisconsin lawyers with accessible, high-quality CLE programming at low or no cost. We took our Ethics School program on the road again to five cities. We presented our trust account update seminar online and at no charge. And we created a series of free, online CLEs that emphasize lawyer well-being.

We restructured our investigation department and provided it with additional resources. The investigation team has strengthened its focus on prioritizing investigations of lawyers that appear to pose the greatest risk to the public and profession. It also emphasized collaboration within and across OLR teams, and increased its use of investigatory tools to better assess and timely respond to potential risks.

We invested in electronic practice management software to modernize operations. OLR entered into an agreement with Actionstep to design a cloud-based legal practice software solution that we expect to go live by the end of the calendar year.

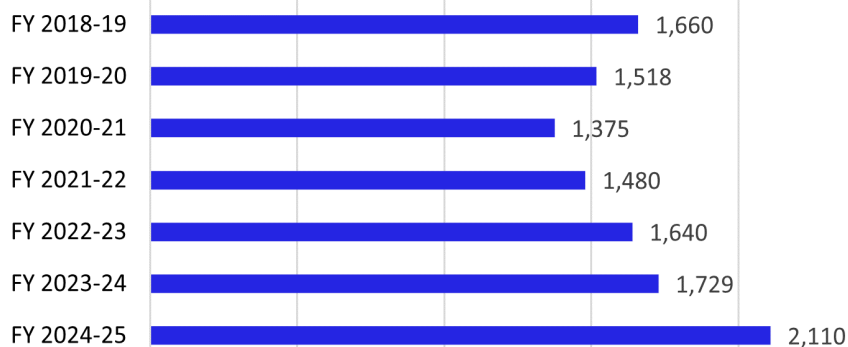
As we move forward under the leadership of a new Chief Justice, our focus remains on balancing regulation with proactive education and support. I thank the Wisconsin Supreme Court for its support, the Board of Administrative Oversight for its guidance, and all Lawyer Regulation System participants for their shared commitment to upholding the integrity of the legal profession. I look forward to continuing our work together in shaping a profession that earns and sustains the public's trust.

**- Timothy C. Samuelson - Director, Office of Lawyer Regulation**

## FY 2024-2025 Statistics

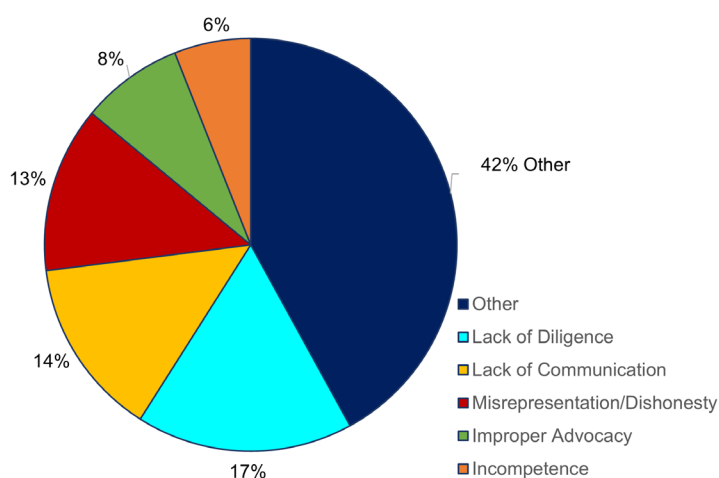
The number of new grievance and inquiry matters received by OLR increased for the fourth consecutive year.

OLR received 2,110 new matters this year, which is a 53% increase since FY 2021-2022.

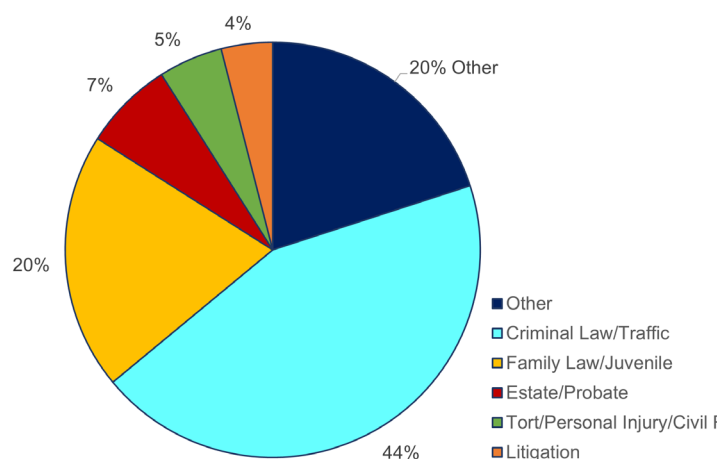


Wisconsin has over 26,000 members of the bar, 20,744 of which are active and in good standing. 1,502 lawyers (less than 6%) were the subject of grievance or inquiry matters. 394 of those lawyers were the subject of multiple matters.

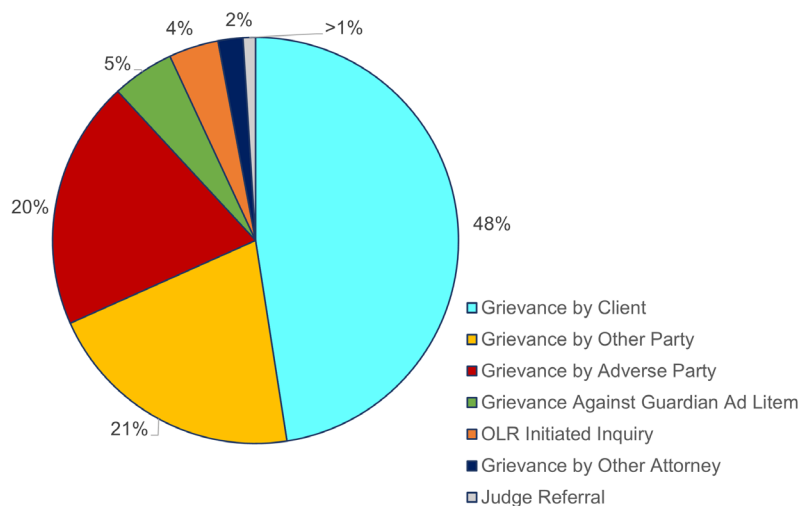
Most Common Allegations



Most Prevalent Practice Areas



Most Common Grievance Sources



Lack of diligence was the most common primary allegation this year, followed by lack of communication and misrepresentation. Lack of diligence has been the most common allegation in each of the past five years, while lack of communication has been in the top three allegations.

The most common practice area was criminal law, followed by family law. This is also consistent with recent years.

## FY 2024-2025 Statistics

**2047** evaluations were completed by OLR Intake.

**123** matters were referred from OLR Intake to OLR Investigation.

**26** matters were granted cause to proceed after presentation to the Preliminary Review Committee and were assigned to OLR Litigation.

**18** complaints were filed by OLR Litigation to initiate disciplinary proceedings with the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

### OLR Intake Resolutions

Closed for Insufficient Evidence	1,443	71%
Referred to Investigation	123	6%
Closed with Advice to Respondent	113	6%
Withdrawn by Grievant	92	4%
Closed for Grievant Non-Response	91	4%
Inquiries Falling Outside Jurisdiction	58	3%
Dispute Resolution	31	2%
Referred to Another Agency	29	1%
Diverted	23	1%
Consensual Reprimand	23	1%
Other	21	1%

### Dispositions and Disciplinary Sanctions

OLR entered into 36 agreements for consensual reprimands with respondent lawyers: 25 private and 11 public reprimands. 23 of these reprimands were entered into at OLR Intake, before referral to investigation. This is an increase over the past two years, each having 16 reprimands at OLR Intake. Supreme Court-appointed referees considered the parties' agreements and issued these reprimands pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

OLR entered into 25 diversion agreements as an alternative to discipline pursuant to SCR 22.10.

The Supreme Court imposed discipline in eight cases. Two respondent lawyers were issued reprimands by the Court. Two respondent lawyers were suspended for six months or less. Two respondent lawyers had their licenses to practice law revoked. Two additional respondent lawyers entered into stipulations with the court for the consensual revocation of their licenses pursuant to SCR 22.19. A list of publicly disciplined lawyers can be found on the Wisconsin Court System website at <https://wicourts.gov/services/public/lawyerreg/statuspublic.htm>.

## The Lawyer Regulation System and OLR

### Who We Are and What We Regulate

The Lawyer Regulation System (LRS) was designed to provide a series of checks and balances to protect the public and supervise the practice of law.

#### Wisconsin Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has “superintending and administrative authority over all courts,” including “the power to discipline and disbar attorneys.” See Wis. Const. Art. VII, § 3(1); *In re Stolen*, 193 Wis. 602, 610 (1927). The Court created the Office of Lawyer Regulation on October 1, 2000, to “carry out the supreme court’s constitutional responsibility to supervise the practice of law and protect the public from misconduct by persons practicing law in Wisconsin.” SCR, Ch. 21, Preamble.

A list of current members of the Supreme Court is included in [Appendix 1](#).

#### Board of Administrative Oversight

The Supreme Court appoints eight lawyers and four public members to serve on the Board of Administrative Oversight. These members are volunteers who serve for terms of three years, for a maximum of two consecutive terms. Among other functions, the Board monitors the LRS and reports its findings to the Supreme Court. It also proposes the LRS annual budget and potential Rule changes to the Supreme Court. The Board meets with the OLR and, as necessary, other LRS components, to review their actions, consider procedure changes, and discuss potential amendments.

A list of current Board members is included in this report as [Appendix 2](#). A complete list of responsibilities of the Board appears under SCR 21.10.



Eau Claire Federal Building and Courthouse  
photo: Carol M. Highsmith

## Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR)

OLR's role is to investigate, regulate, and when necessary prosecute lawyers accused of violating the Rules of Professional Conduct. The Wisconsin model of regulation is designed to move matters involving allegations of minor misconduct toward quick resolution and devote its investigative resources to matters that involve more serious allegations of misconduct and pose a greater risk to the public. OLR handles discipline matters fairly and promptly, balancing protection of the public with the rights of the lawyers involved.

OLR is headquartered in Madison and has 25 staff members. Further details on OLR's divisions and their activity in FY 2024-2025 are included in this report.

## Preliminary Review Committee

The Supreme Court appoints nine lawyers and five public members to serve on the Preliminary Review Committee. These members are volunteers who serve for terms of three years, for a maximum of two consecutive terms. The Committee meets at least quarterly to review the results of OLR investigations of medical incapacity and lawyer misconduct, and to determine whether there is cause to proceed to disciplinary proceedings. The Committee also meets yearly with the Board to review operations of the Committee.

A list of current Committee members appears in [Appendix 3](#). Responsibilities of the Committee appear under SCR 21.07.



Wisconsin State Capitol Statue  
photo: Richard Hurd

## Special Investigators

The Supreme Court appoints lawyers to serve as Special Investigators. These investigators volunteer to take the place of OLR staff in evaluating matters against a participant of the Lawyer Regulation System. In FY 2024-2025, five grievances were made regarding participants in the LRS.

A list of current Special Investigators is included in this report as [Appendix 4](#). Responsibilities of Special Investigators appear under SCR 22.25.

## Special Preliminary Review Panel

The Supreme Court appoints four lawyers and three public members to serve on the Special Preliminary Review Panel. These members are volunteers who serve for terms of three years, for a maximum of two consecutive terms. They review results of Special Investigator investigations to determine if there is cause to proceed to disciplinary proceedings. If a Special Investigator closes a matter after initial evaluation, the grievant may request review of the closure decision. The Special Preliminary Review Panel handles these reviews to determine whether the closure will be affirmed or the matter referred for further evaluation.

A list of current panel members is included in this report as [Appendix 5](#). Responsibilities of the Special Preliminary Review Panel appear under SCR 22.25.

## District Committees

The Supreme Court appoints lawyers and public volunteers in each of the 16 state bar districts to District Committees. They serve terms of for three years, for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

District Committees did not convene in FY 2024-2025. Responsibilities of District Committees appear under SCR 21.06.

## Supreme Court-Appointed Referees

The Supreme Court appoints lawyers and reserve judges to serve as Referees. Referees serve for terms of four years and may be appointed to serve consecutive terms. Referees preside over and conduct hearings in proceedings alleging misconduct or medical incapacity, petitions for license reinstatement after disciplinary suspension, and to review consensual private and public reprimands.

A complete list of responsibilities of Referees appears under SCR 21.08. A list of current Referees is included in this report as [Appendix 6](#).

## Lawyer Regulation System Budget

Lawyer licensure fees are the primary source of funding for the LRS.

In FY 2024-2025, the Supreme Court authorized an annual assessment of \$165 for all full-dues-paying-equivalent lawyers. These fees are lower than comparable border states including Illinois (\$210), Iowa (\$200), and Minnesota (\$171). The State Bar estimated 20,235 full-dues-paying-equivalent lawyers for FY 2024-2025, which is a slight increase after several years of decline.

In addition to lawyer licensure fees, the LRS also receives revenue from several other sources. Under SCR 22.24(1), the Supreme Court may assess costs against lawyers disciplined in Supreme Court proceedings and other matters. The LRS also receives fees for petitions for law license reinstatement, see SCR 10.03(3) & (5), and when out-of-state lawyers file pro hac vice applications. See Wis. Stat. § 20.680(3)(h). In FY 2024-2025, these revenue sources generated \$57,704.

The Supreme Court approves the LRS budget. Under Supreme Court Rules 21.03(6)(m) and 21.10(2)(h), the OLR Director prepares an annual budget and submits it to the Board for review, presentation, comment, and proposal to the Supreme Court.

The FY 2024-2025 budget was \$3,779,600. Total projected expenditures and commitments for FY 2024-2025 were \$3,740,902, which was under budget by \$38,698 (1%).

The FY 2025-2026 budget is \$3,730,700 which is a 1.3% decrease from last year. The LRS remains on a solid fiscal footing with a sufficient reserve fund balance.



## Office of Lawyer Regulation Leadership



### Timothy C. Samuelson, Director

The Supreme Court appointed Samuelson to serve as OLR Director in August 2021. He was formerly the Civil Chief Assistant United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, an Assistant Attorney General with the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), and a Dane County Circuit Court Judge. Before joining the DOJ, Samuelson worked in private practice as a civil litigator in Chicago.

### Julie M. Spoke, Deputy Director - Intake

Spoke joined OLR in 2002 as the agency's first Assistant Litigation Counsel. Spoke was promoted to Deputy Director of Central Intake in 2017 and promoted to Deputy Director in 2022. Spoke also serves on the Board of Directors for the National Organization of Bar Counsel. Before joining OLR, Spoke served as a staff attorney and Court Commissioner in Marathon County, held a judicial clerkship, and worked in private practice as a civil litigator in Wausau.



### Francis X. Sullivan, Deputy Director - Litigation

Sullivan joined OLR in 2022 after 17 years with the Wisconsin Department of Justice, where he served as Director of the Consumer Protection and Antitrust Unit, Deputy Director of the Civil Litigation Unit, and Counsel to the Division of Law Enforcement Services. Before joining the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Sullivan held a judicial clerkship and worked in private practice in Madison.

### Emily E. Kokie, Investigation Manager

Kokie joined OLR in 2004 as a grievance and trust account investigator. In 2024, she was named Lead Investigative Counsel. In 2025, she was promoted to Investigation Manager, where she currently serves as part of OLR's leadership team. Kokie taught legal research and writing and advanced legal writing at the University of Wisconsin Law School from 2004 to 2008. Prior to joining OLR, Kokie was an associate with a small law firm in Richmond, Virginia.



### Krissi Lee, Executive Staff Assistant

Lee is OLR's Executive Staff Assistant. She joined OLR in 2023 after serving in the Wisconsin Court System as the Fifth Judicial District administrative assistant. Lee has experience working as a legal assistant, legal department coordinator, and quality control specialist. Lee manages OLR's support staff and administrative operations.

## Developments and Initiatives at OLR

### Education and Outreach

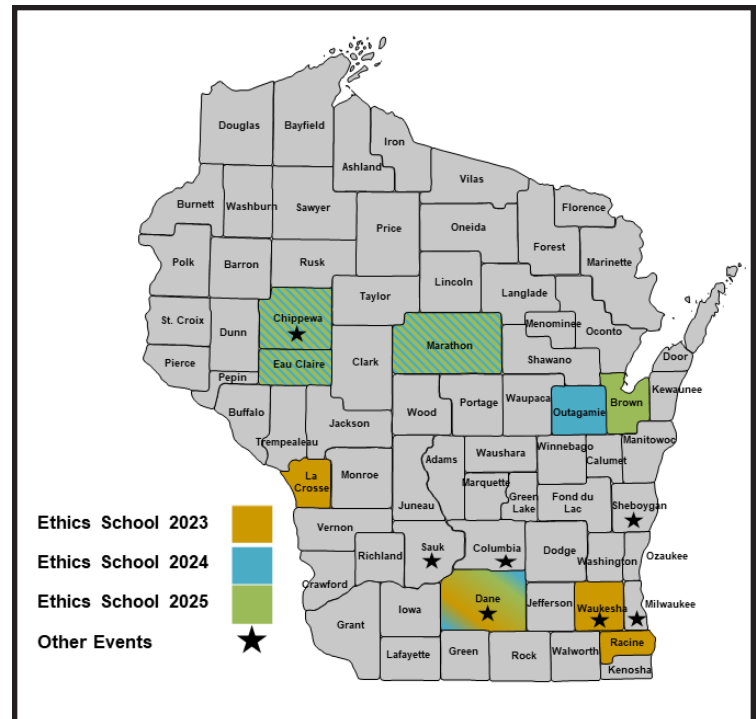
We expanded our education and outreach initiatives, providing hundreds of lawyers with free or low-cost CLE programming. We enhanced our Ethics School program and developed a series of online seminars promoting lawyer well-being. Our focus remains on balancing discipline with proactively offering educational opportunities to help lawyers develop the tools they need to practice effectively, ethically, and well.

This year, we are again partnering with paralegal education programs to offer Ethics School sessions for Fall 2025 in Madison (October 3), Eau Claire (October 16), Wausau (October 17), and Green Bay (November 6).

In September 2024, OLR presented its annual trust account management seminar, and nearly 200 Wisconsin lawyers attended. We will broadcast the next trust account update seminar on October 10, 2025, with an expanded focus on financial security. This training will again be presented online and at no charge to maximize accessibility.

OLR also posts educational materials related to trust accounts on its webpage, as well as materials and resources regarding its other educational programming.

A full list of OLR's outreach in FY 2024-2025 is included in this report as [Appendix 7](#).



**Ethics School 2024**  
 Madison College, Gateway Tech College  
 photos: Krissi Lee, Francis Sullivan

## Lawyer Well-Being

OLR is committed to promoting well-being within the legal profession. Deputy Director Julie Spoke continued her leadership by developing a series of lunch & learn CLE seminars focused on wellness. The seminars are intended to be accessible: they are held at noon, online, for free, and eligible for CLE credit. Our first lunch & learn sessions have already been attended by hundreds of Wisconsin lawyers, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.



## Technology and Innovation

Our multiyear project to modernize OLR's use of technology in its operations is nearing an end. After working collaboratively with the Court System's technical support team, Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP), we contracted with Actionstep in June 2025 to secure a cloud-based legal practice software solution that we expect will be implemented by the end of 2025. We anticipate this software will help us streamline operations, increase collaboration, and improve overall effectiveness.

## Training and Professional Development

OLR staff attended several training sessions in FY 2024-2025 to continue developing new legal skills and expanding the depth of their professional knowledge. Intake counsel, investigative counsel, and assistant litigation counsel attended full-day trainings regarding bankruptcy law, wills, trusts, and probate, as well as seminars on wire fraud, title fraud, and effective communication.

## OLR Intake

### Deputy Director

Julie M. Spoke

J.D., William Mitchell, 1996

### Intake Counsel

Kathryn Galarowicz (Lead)

J.D., Wisconsin, 2012

Emma Babler

J.D., Wisconsin, 2015

Kenneth E. Broderick

J.D., Syracuse, 1999

Cathe J. Hahn

J.D., Delaware, 2000

Michael M. Shull

J.D., Marquette, 2011

Jonathan S. Zeisser

J.D., Wisconsin, 2000

### Intake Professional

Kori Anderson

B.A., Minnesota, 2005

### Program Specialist

Alice Anderson

### Program Associate

Veronika Sauer

The professional staff in OLR's Intake division analyze grievances and inquiries alleging misconduct and medical incapacity – referred to generally as matters – to determine whether they present sufficient legal bases and factual information to proceed with further investigation or discipline.

Intake preliminarily evaluates each matter to determine whether a matter presents sufficient evidence of lawyer misconduct that potentially warrants discipline or other action.

Intake's average processing time was 53 days, an improvement of two weeks from FY 2023-2024 (67 days) and another four weeks from FY 2022-2023 (95 days). Intake completed 87% of evaluations in 90 days or less, which is up 6% from FY 2023-2024 (82%) and a significant increase from FY 2022-2023, when about half were completed within that period. Intake resolved 48% of matters within 30 days, which is consistent with FY 2023-2024 (49%) and an improvement from FY 2022-2023 (20%).

## Intake Resolutions

The overwhelming majority of matters are resolved at Intake. After preliminary evaluation, Intake's professional staff may forward the matter to another agency, attempt to reconcile a minor dispute, or close the matter if it lacks sufficient factual or legal bases. If the matter presents sufficient evidence of lawyer misconduct or medical incapacity, Intake may refer it for investigation, diversion, or consensual reprimand.

### Intake Resolutions FY 2024-2025

Closed for Insufficient Evidence	1,443	71%
Referred to Investigation	123	6%
Closed with Advice to Respondent	113	6%
Withdrawn by Grievant	92	4%
Closed for Grievant Non-Response	91	4%
Inquiries Falling Outside Jurisdiction	58	3%
Dispute Resolution	31	2%
Referred to Another Agency	29	1%
Diverted	23	1%
Consensual Reprimand	23	1%
Other	21	1%

## Closure

Intake closed 71% of matters due to lack of sufficient factual or legal support.

If Intake closes a matter after its evaluation, the grievant may request review. After review, closure is either affirmed, or the appeal is granted and the matter returned to Intake for additional evaluation. In FY 2024-25, grievants submitted 385 requests to review closure decisions. 481 reviews were completed, which included reviews submitted in the previous fiscal year. Ten appeals were granted and reopened to further evaluation. Six were later closed for insufficient evidence, one closed after the dispute was resolved by the parties, and one closed as de minimis. One matter was diverted, and one remains under re-evaluation.

## Diversion to Alternatives to Discipline Program

In appropriate cases, OLR may offer a lawyer a diversion agreement to obtain remedial programming to address the underlying causes of a violation. Instead of receiving professional discipline, the lawyer can agree to participate in training to improve their legal or practice management skills or to address underlying medical, mental health, or substance abuse issues. Common diversion programming includes consultation with the State Bar's Practice411 and Lawyer Assistance programs, State Bar Ethics Counsel, or attendance at OLR's trust account seminar.

OLR Intake entered into 23 diversion agreements after preliminary evaluation in FY 2024-25. An additional two diversion agreements were entered into at OLR Investigation. Although this represents a reduction from the prior three years – 33 diversion agreements in FY 2023-24, 43 in FY 2022-23, and 54 in FY 2021-22 – OLR continues to prioritize diversion agreements because they protect the public while allowing otherwise competent lawyers to continue practicing.

## Consensual Reprimands

Reprimands are the least severe sanction of professional discipline. If OLR and the lawyer agree on a reprimand, the Supreme Court appoints a referee to evaluate and consider the parties' proposed written reprimand. If the referee approves the proposed sanction, the referee imposes the reprimand without additional Supreme Court review. This is unlike other forms of discipline, which the Supreme Court itself must review and impose.

## Referral to OLR Investigation

If a matter warrants further investigation or involves allegations of misconduct that are likely to result in discipline more severe than a reprimand, the matter is referred to OLR Investigation. In FY 2024-25, Intake referred 123 grievances (6% of all matters) to Investigation. This is roughly consistent with FY 2023-2024.

## OLR Investigation

### Investigation Manager

Emily E. Kokie  
J.D., Richmond, 1998

### Investigative Counsel

Lorry Eldien  
J.D., Wisconsin, 1989

Rita Knauss  
J.D., Wisconsin, 1996

Beth Kugler  
J.D., Wisconsin, 1998

Travis J. Stieren  
Trust Account Program Administrator  
J.D., Notre Dame, 1998

Joel Witt  
J.D., Wisconsin, 2016

### Paralegal

Jackson McAndrew

Supreme Court Rule 22.03 lays out OLR's investigative powers and duties.

Under SCR 22.03, if a lawyer does not promptly provide a full and fair response to the initial notice, or otherwise fails to cooperate at any time during the investigation, their license is automatically suspended under SCR 22.03(4). The threat of automatic suspension has been an effective tool to compel respondents to cooperate with OLR.

In FY 2024-2025, OLR issued notices of impending suspension under SCR 22.03(4) to 17 lawyers, regarding approximately 31 investigations. Seven lawyers who received those notices promptly cooperated in the investigations. Ten were suspended for failure to cooperate. Three were reinstated within six days and a fourth was reinstated within 25 days. Five remain suspended for continuing failure to cooperate with OLR's investigations into their conduct. One lawyer's matters were dismissed after the respondent's death.

After completing the investigation, OLR may dismiss the matter, resolve the matter with a diversion or consensual reprimand, or seek cause to proceed to litigation. If OLR dismisses a matter, the grievant may request review of that decision by the Preliminary Review Committee under SCR 22.05(2).

If the lawyer's conduct warrants suspension or revocation of their license, OLR will present the matter to the Committee for determination that there is cause for OLR to proceed to litigation. When OLR presents a matter to the Committee, it submits investigative reports – including all relevant inculpatory and exculpatory information – to one of the Committee's two panels. After OLR's presentation, the Committee panel meets in closed sessions to discuss each matter. If at least four panel members determine there is cause to proceed, the matter is assigned to OLR Litigation to file and prosecute a complaint alleging professional misconduct or medical incapacity before the Supreme Court. If the panel does not find cause to proceed, OLR may dismiss the matter or continue the investigation and resubmit the matter to a different panel under SCR 22.08(1)(a).

When appropriate, Investigative Counsel collaborate with Litigation Counsel to conduct a narrow, targeted investigation so that OLR may seek the lawyer's immediate suspension under SCR 22.20 when a lawyer is convicted or found guilty of serious crime, or SCR 22.21 when it is determined the lawyer's continued practice of law poses a threat to the interests of the public and to the administration of justice.

## OLR Litigation

### Deputy Director

Francis X. Sullivan  
J.D., Wisconsin, 2000

### Assistant Litigation Counsel

Jonathan Hendrix  
J.D., Wisconsin, 2006

Kim Kluck  
J.D., Florida State, 1994

Tom Laitsch  
J.D., Chicago-Kent, 1994

John Payette  
J.D., Wisconsin, 1995

### Paralegal

Melissa Chicker

Once the Preliminary Review Committee determines that OLR has established cause to proceed in a matter, the Litigation team prepares and files a complaint with the Supreme Court that alleges professional misconduct or medical incapacity. Once OLR files proof of service, the Supreme Court appoints a referee to preside over the litigation.

The Supreme Court-appointed referee presides over the case with the powers of a judge presiding over a civil action. Both OLR and the lawyer are able to use civil discovery tools, including written discovery and depositions. Either party may file dispositive motions.

If the matter proceeds to hearing, the referee conducts the hearing as the trial of a civil action to a court. OLR has the burden of proving misconduct or medical incapacity by clear, satisfactory, and convincing evidence. The referee may – but is not required to – order post-hearing briefing from the parties.

After the hearing and any subsequent briefing, the referee files a report with the Supreme Court that sets forth proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, and a recommendation for dismissal or discipline. Either party may appeal the referee's report. If neither party appeals, the Supreme Court reviews the referee's report and determines appropriate discipline in cases of misconduct or appropriate action in cases of medical incapacity. If either party appeals the referee's report, the Supreme Court orders briefing and may order oral argument.



Badger - Wisconsin State Capital  
photo: Adam Fagen

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is composed of seven justices and is the state's highest court. In addition to its law-declaring function, the Supreme Court has administrative and regulatory authority over all Wisconsin courts and lawyers who practice law in Wisconsin.

**Chief Justice Jill J. Karofsky**  
**Justice Annette Kingsland Ziegler**  
**Justice Rebecca G. Bradley**  
**Justice Rebecca F. Dallet**  
**Justice Brian K. Hagedorn**  
**Justice Janet C. Protasiewicz**  
**Justice Susan M. Crawford**

### Appendix 2 - Board of Administrative Oversight

**Attorney Rene L'Esperance (Chair)** is in private practice and a partner in the L'Esperance & Feidt LLC law firm. He earned his J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law in 2011. His first term expires September 30, 2025.

**Attorney Kathleen Pakes (Vice Chair)** serves as Assigned Counsel Division Director at the Wisconsin Office of the State Public Defender. She earned her J.D. from Louis D. Brandeis School of Law in 1995. Her first term expires September 30, 2025.

**Attorney Michael F. Bartzen** is the Director of Contracts and Ethics Officer for Derco Aerospace, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Lockheed Martin. He earned his J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 2008. His first term ends September 30, 2027.

**Mr. Denis Donohoe** is a public member and the principal of Celtic Holdings, LLC. His background is in the manufacturing business for operations consulting and information systems support customizations. His second term expires September 30, 2025.

**Mr. Bruce Hutler** is a public member and a partner at the accounting firm of Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP. His first term expires September 30, 2025.

**Attorney William Jones** is in private practice and the principal of the Jones Law Firm. He earned his J.D. from the University of Tulsa College of Law in 1997. His first term expires September 30, 2025.

**Commissioner Nancy Kallgren** serves as a court commissioner and register in probate in Marinette County. She earned her J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law in 1994. Her first term expires September 30, 2025.

**Attorney Deanne Koll** is a partner in the Bakke Norman, S.C. law firm. She earned her J.D. from William Mitchell College of Law in 2006. Her second term expires September 30, 2026.

**Attorney Marissa A. Reynolds** serves as an Assistant Marathon County Corporation Counsel. She earned her J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 2016. Her second term expires September 30, 2025.

The **Hon. Michael D. Rust** serves as Judge for Branch I of the Winnebago County Circuit Court. He earned his J.D. from Marquette University in 2006. His second term expires on September 30, 2025.

**Mr. Peter Sorce** is a public member who has also served as a Washington County Supervisor and on many other Supreme Court boards, including the Medical Mediation Panel and the Planning and Policy Advisory Committee. His second term expires September 30, 2026.

**Ms. Wendie Witzke** is a public member and serves as an instructor of the Legal Studies/Paralegal Program at Western Technical College in La Crosse, WI. Her first term expires September 30, 2026.

### **Appendix 3 - Preliminary Review Committee**

**Attorney Jean C. Baker (Chair)** was a partner in the Quarles & Brady LLP law firm until she retired in 2020. She earned her J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School and her Ph.D. from the University of Georgia. Her second term expires September 30, 2026.

**Attorney Donald A. Daugherty, Jr. (Vice Chair)** is Senior Counsel, Litigation, at the Defense of Freedom Institute for Policy Studies. He earned his J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law in 1980. His second term expires September 30, 2026.

**Attorney Duffy Dillon** is the founder of Dillon Grube, LLC in Janesville. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 2000. His first term expires September 30, 2026.

**Mr. Gerald Faller** is a public member who was the owner and President of Green Bay Title Company, Inc., Treasurer and Finance Director for the Green Bay Area Catholic Education Schools, and Finance Director for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He graduated from Marquette University. His first term expires September 30, 2026.

**Attorney Kristen Hardy** is Assistant General Counsel and Assistant Secretary at Northwestern Mutual. She earned her J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 2014. Her second term expires September 30, 2025.

**Mr. Brad Hopgood** is a public member who works as an Information Technology professional in Madison, Wisconsin. He earned his bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee in 2010. His second term expires September 30, 2027.

**Attorney Kelsey Johnson** is an attorney with the law office of Renee E. Mura, S.C. She earned her J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 2017. Her first term expires September 30, 2026.

**Mr. Jon Kratochvil** is a public member who is a licensed private detective and CEO of State Process Service, Inc. His second term expires September 30, 2025.

**Attorney Chad Lynch** is Corporation Counsel for Vilas County. He earned his J.D. from Hamline University School of Law in 2014. His first term expires September 30, 2026.

**Ms. Sara MacDonald** is a public member who has worked as a social worker in the areas of child protective services, foster care adoptions, long-term care, domestic violence, AODA, and criminal justice. She earned her MSW from the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay in 2011. Her second term expires September 30, 2025.

**Mr. David Peterson**, CPA, is a public member who taught in the accounting program at Madison College before his retirement in 2014. He earned his BBA from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire and his MBA from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. His first term expires September 30, 2026.

**Attorney Amy. F. Scholl** is a shareholder at Coyne, Schultz, Becker & Bauer, S.C., specializing in civil litigation, particularly insurance defense and the defense of healthcare and other professional service providers. She earned her J.D. from The John Marshall law School in 1997. Her first term ends September 30, 2027.

**Attorney Gerald Sternberg** is an attorney based in Madison. He earned his J.D. from the New England School of Law in 1976. His first term expires September 30, 2025.

**Attorney Thomas C. Wendt** serves as the paralegal program director and as full-time faculty at Northcentral Technical College – Center for Business and Industry. He earned his J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 2002. His first term ends September 30, 2027.

#### **Appendix 4 - Special Investigators**

**Attorney Deborah A. Asher** was appointed as a special investigator in 2020. She practices family law at Asher Law Office in Chippewa Falls. She earned her J.D. from the University of North Dakota School of Law in 2001.

**Attorney Lucas Bennewitz** was appointed as a special investigator in 2021. He is an Assistant Attorney General with the Wisconsin Department of Justice. He earned his J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 2015.

**Attorney Peter J. Block** was appointed as a special investigator in 2020. He is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Milwaukee. He earned his J.D. from DePaul University College of Law in 2002.

**Attorney Nathaniel Cade, Jr.** was appointed as a special investigator in 2014. He is the owner of Cade Law Group in Milwaukee. He earned his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School in 1996.

**Attorney Robert W. Dean** was appointed as a special investigator in 2020. He is Assistant Counsel for Fox Communities Credit Union in Appleton. He earned his J.D. from the Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America in 1997.

**Attorney Nicole J. Druckrey** was appointed as a special investigator in 2021. She is an attorney with EMCO Chemical Distributors, Inc., in Pleasant Prairie. She earned her J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School in 2003.

**Attorney Sarah Troupis Ferguson** was appointed as a special investigator in 2016. She is of counsel with Hanson Reynolds, LLC in Madison. She earned her J.D. from the University of Notre Dame Law School in 2006.

**Attorney Gretchen Gerrard** was appointed as a special investigator in 2022. She is an attorney with Lawyers at Work, LLC in La Crosse. She earned her J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law in 2016.

**Attorney Mark J. Goldstein** was appointed as a special investigator in 2014. He is the president of Goldstein Law Group, SC, in Milwaukee. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1994.

**Attorney William A. Grunewald** was appointed as a special investigator in 2014. He is a partner with Jenson, Scott, Grunewald & Shiffler, S.C. in Medford. He earned his J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1983.

**Attorney Anthony P. Hahn** was appointed as a special investigator in 2015. He practices at Gruber Law Offices, LLC in Milwaukee. He earned his J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 2000.

**Attorney Alexander J. Hall** was appointed as a special investigator in 2016. He is a senior claims practice specialist with Gallagher Bassett. He earned his J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 2014.

**Attorney Victor C. Harding** was appointed as a special investigator in 2005. He is an attorney with Warshafsky Rotter Tarnoff & Bloch, SC in Milwaukee. He earned his J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 1977.

**Attorney Thomas W. Harnisch** was appointed as a special investigator in 2012. He is the owner of Thomas W. Harnisch Law Office in Neilsville. He earned his J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1972.

**Attorney Sean Harrington** was appointed as a special investigator in 2024. He is the founder of Harrington Law in Prescott. He earned his J.D. from Taft Law School in 2014.

**Attorney Jay E. Heit** was appointed as a special investigator in 2017. He is an attorney with Herrick & Hart, S.C. in Eau Claire. He earned his J.D. from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 1995.

**Attorney Krista G. LaFave** was appointed as a special investigator in 2022. She is an attorney with Warshafsky, Rotter, Tarnoff & Bloch, S.C. in Milwaukee. She earned her J.D. from Tulane University School of Law in 2013.

**Attorney Michael L. Laufenberg** was appointed as a special investigator in 2017. He is an attorney with Keberle & Laufenberg, LLP in West Bend. He earned his J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 1995.

**Attorney Amy Lonergan** was appointed as a special investigator in 2022. She is a founding partner at Amenity Legal. She earned her J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 2007.

**Attorney Michael S. Maistelman** was appointed as a special investigator in 2021. He is the managing member and founder of Maistelman & Associates in Bayside. He earned his J.D. from Franklin Pierce Law Center in 1994.

**Attorney Maxfield E. Neuhaus** was appointed as a special investigator in 2014. He is a partner at Rodli, Beskar, Neuhaus, Murray & Pletcher, S.C. in River Falls. He earned his J.D. from Hamline University School of Law in 2008.

**Attorney Bryce M. Pierson** was appointed as a special investigator in 2020. He is a legal advisor to the Wisconsin Office of Judicial Education in Madison. He earned his J.D. from Southern Illinois University School of Law in 2012.

**Attorney Ryan Poe-Galvinski** was appointed as a special investigator in 2022. She is a clinical assistant professor of law at the University of Wisconsin School of Law in Madison. She earned her J.D. from Quinnipiac University School of Law in 2004.

**Attorney Bryant Ray** was appointed as a special investigator in 2021. He is an assistant vice president and trust officer at the Bank of Sun Prairie. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin School of Law in 2016.

**Attorney Ronald S. Stadler** was appointed as a special investigator in 2014. He is a founding shareholder at Stadler Sacks LLC in Richfield.

**Attorney Richard J. Summerfield** was appointed as a special investigator in 2015. He is a partner at Kostner-Kostner & Summerfield, S.C. in Bloomer. He earned his J.D. from Hamline University School of Law in 2006.

**Attorney Johnathan G. Woodward** was appointed as a special investigator in 2020. He is an attorney at Houseman & Feind, LLP in Grafton. He earned his J.D. from Pepperdine University School of Law in 2006.

**Attorney Daniel L. Woehrer** was appointed as a special investigator in 2021. He practices at Woehrer Law Office in Wauwatosa. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin School of Law in 1987.

### **Appendix 5 - Special Preliminary Review Panel**

**Assistant Attorney General Eliot M. Held (Chair)** serves as an Assistant Attorney General with the Wisconsin Department of Justice. He earned his J.D. from the University of Arizona College of Law in 2009. His first term expires September 30, 2026.

**Attorney Adam Jarchow** is the founder of Jarchow Law, LLC in Clear Lake. He earned his J.D. from the University of Florida Levin College of Law in 2004. His first term expires September 30, 2027.

**Ms. Monelle Johnson** is an Executive Assistant with Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinic in Medford. She earned her B.S. from Mount Senario College in 1984 and her M.S. from Kennedy-Western University in 2000. Her second term expires September 30, 2027.

**Mr. Amos Malone** serves as a probation parole officer with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections in Madison. He earned his B.S. and M.E. from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. His second term expires September 30, 2026.

**Attorney Jillian Pfeifer** serves as the Oneida County District Attorney in Rhinelander. She earned her J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 2016. Her first term expires September 30, 2026.

**Attorney Shari Stevens** is a founding partner of Vann & Chamberlain in Green Bay. She earned her J.D. from Texas Wesleyan Law School in 2009. Her first term expires September 30, 2027.

**Ms. Cindy Zahrte** served as the Superintendent of the Tomah Area School District until retirement in 2020. She earned her B.S. and M.S. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Her first term expires September 30, 2025.

## **Appendix 6 - Supreme Court-Appointed Referees**

The **Hon. Valerie Bailey-Rihn** served as a judge of the Dane County Circuit Court from 2016-2022. She was previously a partner at the Quarles & Brady law firm in Madison. Judge Bailey-Rihn earned her J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1991. Her term as a referee ends December 31, 2025.

**Attorney Charles Barr** has more than 40 years of experience in private practice. He is currently an arbitrator on the Commercial Arbitration and Consumer Arbitration Panels of the American Arbitration Association. He earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1977. Attorney Barr's term as a referee ends December 31, 2025.

The **Hon. Sue Bischel** served as a judge of the Brown County Circuit Court from 1992-2012. She earned her J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1978. Her term as a referee ends December 31, 2025.

The **Hon. Steven Cray** served as a judge of the Chippewa County Circuit Court from 2008-2020. He was previously in private practice. Judge Cray earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1976. His term as a referee ends December 31, 2025.

The **Hon. Jean DiMotto** served as a judge of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court from 1997-2013. Previously, she was an administrative law judge and an attorney in private practice. Judge DiMotto earned her J.D. from Marquette University School of Law in 1984. Her term as a referee ends December 31, 2025.

**Attorney James Friedman** retired in 2019 after 38 years in private practice. He earned his J.D. from the University of Notre Dame Law School in 1972. His term as a referee ends December 31, 2027.

The **Hon. Joseph Jacobson** serves as an Administrative Law Judge for the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review. He earned his J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1994. His term ends December 31, 2025.

The **Hon. Edward Leineweber** served as a judge of the Richland County Circuit Court from 1997 through 2011. He has more than 30 years of experience in private practice. Judge Leineweber earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1976. His term as a referee ends December 31, 2027.

**Attorney David Piehler** has more than 40 years of experience in private practice. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1980. His term as a referee ends December 31, 2027.

The **Hon. Karen Seifert** served as a judge of the Winnebago County Circuit Court from 2006-2021. She previously was a Winnebago County Court Commissioner and Assistant Corporation Counsel. Judge Seifert earned her J.D. from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1987. Her term as a referee ends December 31, 2025.

**Attorney Michael Tobin** retired in 2018 after 32 years with the Wisconsin State Public Defender's Office. He earned his J.D. from the University of Texas in 1977. Attorney Tobin's term as a referee ends December 31, 2027.

**Attorney James Winiarski** has more than 40 years of experience in private practice. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1974. Attorney Winiarski's term as a referee ends December 31, 2027.

### **Appendix 7 - Outreach 2024-2025**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Type</b>	<b>Title/Location</b>	<b>Staff</b>
7/15/24	CLE	Demystifying the Black Box of Lawyer Regulation (Virtual, American Bar Association)	Timothy Samuelson
8/2/24	CLE	Insider Scoop on Getting from an Idea to a Rule Change (Chicago, National Organization of Bar Counsel)	Julie Spoke
9/20/24	CLE	Annual Trust Account Update 2024	Travis Stieren Emily Kokie
10/4/24	CLE	A Grievance Was Filed -- Now What? (Madison, State Bar of WI)	Francis Sullivan
10/4/24	CLE	Ethics School (Madison, Madison College)	Timothy Samuelson Michael Shull Julie Spoke Francis Sullivan Travis Stieren Tom Laitsch
10/9/24	CLE	A Grievance Was Filed -- Now What? (Madison, Department of Health Services Office of Legal Counsel)	Francis Sullivan
10/10/24	CLE	OLR Overview (Society of Family Lawyers)	Michael Shull Jonathan Hendrix
10/18/24	CLE	50 Well-Being Tips in 50 Minutes (Wisconsin Dells, State Bar of WI)	Julie Spoke
10/31/24	CLE	Ethics School (Waukesha, Waukesha County Technical College)	Michael Shull Julie Spoke Francis Sullivan Emily Kokie Tom Laitsch
11/6/24	Publication	<a href="#"><u>Dilemma: Will I Be Disciplined If I Fall for a Wire Transfer Scam?</u></a>	Travis Stieren

11/7/24	CLE	OLR Grievances and Ethics in Technology (Virtual, Chippewa Co. Bar Association)	Kathryn Galarowicz
11/8/24	CLE	Ethics School (La Crosse, Western Technical College)	Michael Shull Julie Spoke Emily Kokie Tom Laitsch
11/14/24	CLE	Medical Incapacity (Elkhard Lake, Wisconsin Courts Judicial Conference)	Timothy Samuelson Francis Sullivan
11/15/24	CLE	Ethics School (Racine, Gateway Technical College)	Michael Shull Julie Spoke Francis Sullivan Emily Kokie Tom Laitsch
<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Type</b>	<b>Title/Location</b>	<b>Staff</b>
12/19/24	CLE	Family Law Ethics (Madison, State Bar of WI)	Timothy Samuelson
2/7/25	CLE	The Use of Temporary Orders (Phoenix, National Organization of Bar Counsel)	Francis Sullivan
2/25/25	CLE	OLR 101 (Waukesha, Waukesha Co. Bar Association)	Jonathan Hendrix
3/13/25	Event	Municipal Judges Conference (Lake Delton, Wisconsin Courts Judicial Conference)	Timothy Samuelson Francis Sullivan
3/17/25 - 3/21/25	CLE	Advanced Trial Techniques and Investigative Skills (U.S. Virgin Islands, National Association of Attorneys General)	Francis Sullivan
4/8/25	CLE	Preparing for a Legal Career (University of WI, Madison Pre-Law Society)	Francis Sullivan
4/17/25	CLE	A View from the Bench: Best Practices on Briefs and Oral Arguments from Dist. 2 COA (Madison, Wisconsin Department of Justice, Wisconsin Office of State Public Defender)	Timothy Samuelson
5/1/25	Event	2025 Law Day Pro Bono Breakfast (Madison, Dane Co. Bar Association)	Timothy Samuelson
5/15/25	CLE	Attorney Well-Being (Milwaukee, Reinhart Law Firm)	Julie Spoke
5/23/25	CLE	How to Handle a Grievance (Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin Department of Justice, State Prosecutor Education and Training)	Timothy Samuelson
6/18/25	CLE	The Role of OLR: Ethical Obligations and Risk Management for Law Firms (Wisconsin Dells, State Bar of Wisconsin, WI Association of Legal Administrators)	Timothy Samuelson



**Wisconsin Capitol**  
**Carol M. Highsmith**