



Wisconsin Supreme Court Lawyer Regulation System

Annual Report FY 2025-2026

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Office of Lawyer Regulation
Director Timothy C. Samuelson

Board of Administrative Oversight
Chairperson Rene L'Esperance

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credit: Krissi Lee

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“A lawyer should strive to attain the highest level of skill, to improve the law and the legal profession and to exemplify the legal profession’s ideals of public service.”

SCR, Ch. 20, Preamble:
A Lawyer’s Responsibilities, Cmt. 7



Tenney Building, 1934
credit: Angus Boyd McVicar (WHS Archive)

Message from the Board of Administrative Oversight

It has been a privilege to serve as Chair of the Board of Administrative Oversight during the past year. I am grateful for the dedication of our members and pleased to welcome the new members who have joined us.

Efficiency has been a particular focus of the Board this year. Our work has included reviewing proposed rule changes, examining budget and cost issues, monitoring the implementation of new technology at OLR, and considering systemic issues affecting the attorney regulation process. Throughout that work, our goal has been straightforward: to help ensure that the rules clearly state what is intended, are implemented as intended, and allow the system to operate fairly, effectively, and efficiently.

In the coming year, we will continue that work by identifying opportunities to clarify and update the rules, improve efficiency, and ensure that the attorney regulation system fulfills the responsibilities assigned to it by the Supreme Court while remaining mindful of the costs imposed on Wisconsin lawyers. The Board is aware of the increase in grievances over the past year and will continue to monitor the trend, examine its potential causes, and consider appropriate responses.

I thank our members for their service and look forward to continuing our work toward an attorney regulation system that merits the confidence of the Court, the profession, and the public.

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

Message from the Office of Lawyer Regulation

The Office of Lawyer Regulation serves the Wisconsin Supreme Court in its responsibility to supervise and regulate the practice of law. In this role, OLR oversees evaluation, investigation, and prosecution of allegations of professional misconduct and medical incapacity. We strive to operate fairly and efficiently while protecting the public and preserving confidence in the legal profession.

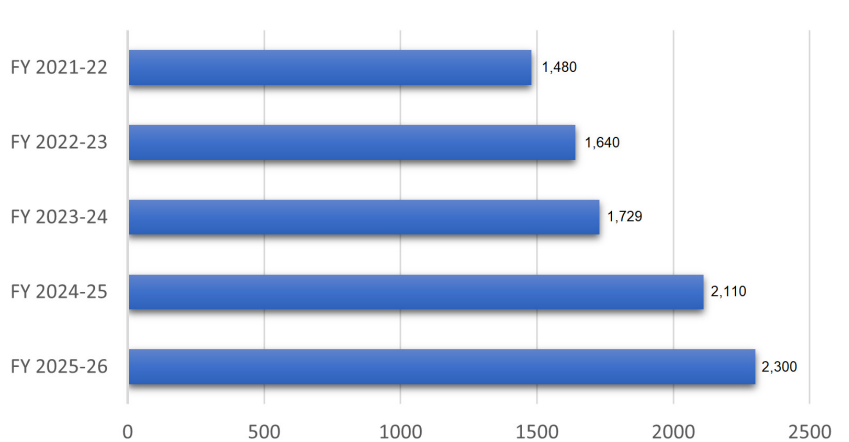
This report reflects that work, from the preliminary evaluation of complaints at Intake through the prosecution of professional misconduct allegations before the Supreme Court, to the many programs we offer to help lawyers meet their professional obligations. As the legal profession continues to rapidly evolve and is shaped by changes in technology, OLR is committed to keeping our regulatory systems and programs responsive to these changes, while continuing to uphold the standards that the public and legal profession demands.

OLR remains committed to a regulatory system that is fair, effective, and worthy of the public and profession's trust. I thank my OLR colleagues for their continued professionalism, the Board of Administrative Oversight for its work monitoring of the Lawyer Regulation System, and the Supreme Court for its support.

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

FY 2025-2026 Statistics

The number of new grievances and inquiry matters received by OLR increased for the fifth consecutive year. OLR received 2,300 new matters this year, a 67% increase since FY 2021-22.

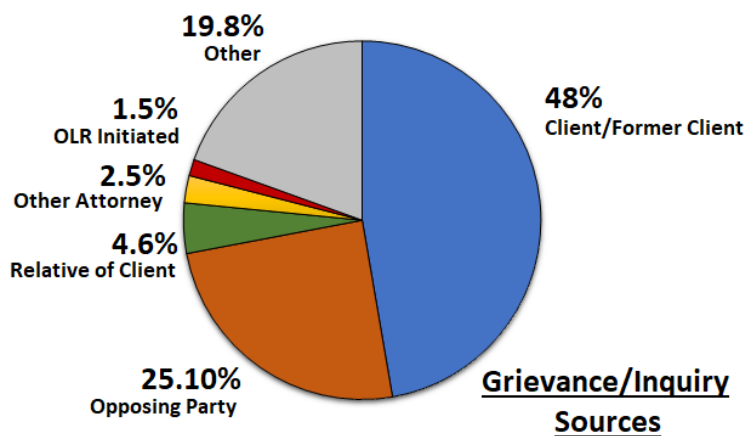
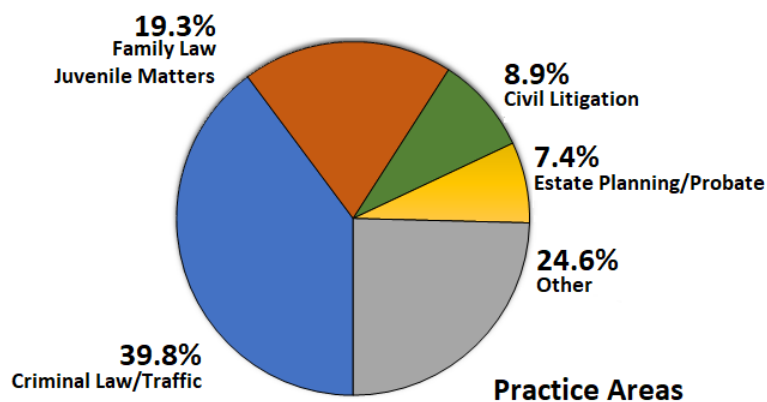
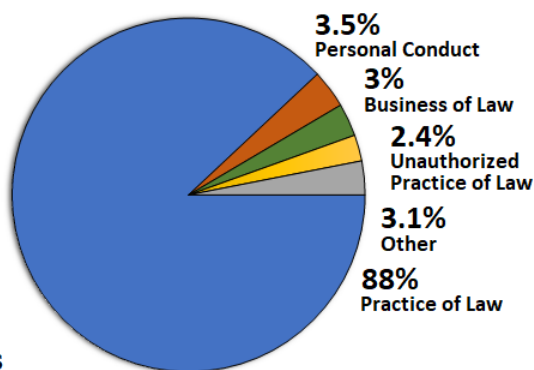


Wisconsin has over 26,000 members of the bar, 21,290 of which are active and in good standing. 1,590 lawyers (7.5%) were the subject of grievance or inquiry matters, and 413 of those lawyers were the subject of multiple matters.

The most common allegations, practice areas, and sources of grievances/inquiries are consistent with recent years.*

*These statistics were generated for the period from January 1 through June 30, 2026, the first full quarters after implementation of Actionstep.

Common Allegations



FY 2025-2026 Statistics

2268 evaluations completed by Intake.

84 matters referred from Intake to Investigation or Litigation.

18 matters granted cause to proceed after presentation to the Preliminary Review Committee.

17 complaints filed to initiate disciplinary proceedings with the Wisconsin Supreme Court.*

**A single litigation matter or disciplinary proceeding may encompass multiple grievance matters.*



Dispositions and Disciplinary Sanctions

OLR entered into 39 agreements for consensual reprimands with respondent lawyers: 27 private and 12 public reprimands. This is similar to last year's 36 consensual reprimands. However, significantly more were entered into at Intake (30 compared to 23). Supreme Court-appointed referees considered the parties' agreements and issued all of these reprimands pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The Supreme Court imposed discipline in 16 cases: six respondent lawyers were issued reprimands by the Court; three were suspended for more than six months; six respondent lawyers had their licenses to practice law revoked; one entered into a stipulation with the court for the consensual revocation of their license pursuant to SCR 22.19.

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

A list of recent publicly disciplined lawyers can be found on the Wisconsin Courts site:

<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 as shown below.

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 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 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.



Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR)

Under the Supreme Court Rules, 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 24 staff members. Further details on OLR's activity in FY 2025-2026 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.



credit: Kathryn Galarowicz

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 LRS. In FY 2025-2026, 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.

The Panel reviews 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

On October 30, 2025, the Supreme Court voted unanimously to grant [Rule Petition 24-06](#), which repealed District Committees.

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 2025-2026, the Supreme Court authorized an annual assessment of \$180 for all full dues-paying-equivalent lawyers. These fees are lower than comparable border states including Illinois (\$210) and Iowa (\$200), and consistent with Minnesota (\$171). The State Bar estimated 20,388 full-dues-paying-equivalent lawyers for FY 2025-2026, which is the second consecutive increase after several years of gradual 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 2025-2026, these revenue sources are projected to total \$86,685.

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 2025-2026 budget was \$3,730,700. Total projected expenditures and commitments for FY 2025-2026 are \$3,614,808, which is under budget by \$115,892 (3.1%). The FY 2026-2027 budget is \$3,662,600 which is a 1.8% decrease from the previous year, which is the second consecutive budgetary decrease.

The LRS remains on a solid fiscal footing with a sufficient reserve fund balance.



credit: Veronika Sauer

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

OLR continues to emphasize education and outreach by providing hundreds of Wisconsin lawyers with free or low-cost CLE programming. Our focus remains on balancing discipline with offering proactive high-quality and low-cost educational opportunities to help lawyers develop the professional 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 2026 in Madison (October 2), Janesville (October 22), Racine (TBD), and La Crosse (November 5).

In September 2025, OLR presented its annual trust account update seminar, and nearly 200 Wisconsin lawyers attended. The next trust account update seminar is tentatively scheduled for November 13, 2026. This year's seminar will focus on financial security and evolving technology. It will again be presented online and at no charge for Wisconsin lawyers and non-lawyer professionals.

OLR also posts educational materials related to trust accounts on its webpage, as well as materials and resources regarding its other programming. A full list of OLR's educational outreach in FY 2025-2026 is included in this report as [Appendix 7](#).



credit: Francis Sullivan

Timothy Samuelson, Francis Sullivan
Ethics School



credit: Krissi Lee

Lawyer Well-Being

OLR is committed to promoting well-being within the legal profession. Deputy Director Julie Spoke continued her leadership in hosting a series of lunch & learn seminars focused on wellness. These one-hour seminars are held approximately monthly and are usually eligible for CLE credit. Hundreds of Wisconsin lawyers have attended our first year of lunch & learn sessions, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

Technology and Innovation

In November 2025, after working collaboratively with the Court System's technical support team, Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP), OLR implemented Actionstep, a cloud-based legal practice software solution. We anticipate this software will help us streamline operations, increase collaboration, and improve overall effectiveness.



credit: Shannon Green, State Bar of WI



**Michael Shull, Joanna Franco,
Emily Kokie, Kim Kluck**

2026 Diversity Clerkship Reception

Training and Professional Development

OLR staff attended several training sessions in FY 2025-2026 to continue developing their legal skills and expanding the depth of their professional knowledge. For example, the State Public Defender's Office presented a two-day intensive training seminar for intake counsel, investigative counsel, and assistant litigation counsel. OLR staff also attended seminars regarding lawyer's fees, artificial intelligence, legal research, 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

McKenzie Brewer

J.D., Wisconsin, 2023

Kenneth E. Broderick

J.D., Syracuse, 1999

Cathe J. Hahn

J.D., Delaware, 2000
(retired October 2025)

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

Vanessa De La Rosa

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 to Investigation, discipline, or other action. Intake's average processing time for FY 2025-26 was 51 days, slightly faster than FY 2024-25 (53 days), and notably faster than FY 2023-24 (67 days) and FY 2022-23 (95 days).

Intake completed 88% of evaluations in 90 days or less, consistent with last year (87%) and up from FY 2023-24 (82%) and FY 2022-2023 (about half). Intake resolved 49% of matters within 30 days, which is consistent with last year (48%) and FY 2023-24 (49%) and an improvement from FY 2022-2023 (20%).

Intake Dispositions

The overwhelming majority of OLR 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 Dispositions FY 2025-2026

Closed for Insufficient Evidence	1653	72.9%
Closed with Advice to Respondent	151	6.7%
Resolved or Withdrawn by Grievant	147	6.5%
Closed for Grievant Non-Response	85	3.7%
Referral to OLR Investigation or Litigation	84	3.7%
Time Barred	49	2.2%
Referred to Another Agency	35	1.5%
Consensual Reprimand*	32	1.4%
Diversion or Fee Resolution	19	0.8%
Placed on Intake Hold**	13	0.6%

* A single consensual reprimand may encompass multiple grievance/inquiry matters.

** Hold pending resolution of a related OLR matter or underlying legal matter that may be dispositive of the evaluation or inhibits further evaluation until resolved.

Closure

Intake closed 73% of matters due to lack of sufficient factual or legal support.

If Intake closes a matter after its preliminary 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 2025-26, grievants submitted 438 requests to review closure decisions, 22.5% of matters eligible for review. This is consistent with FY 2024-25 where there were 385 requests, which was also 22.5% of matters eligible for review. 432 reviews were completed, and 11 were reopened to further evaluation after review. Four of these were later closed for insufficient evidence, two as de minimus rule violations, one matter referred for investigation, and four remain 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 entered into nine diversion agreements in FY 2025-26, all of which came from Intake.

Consensual Reprimands

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.

In FY 2025-26, OLR Intake entered into 23 consensual private reprimands and seven consensual public reprimands without referral to Investigation. This is an increase from FY 2024-25 in which Intake entered into 20 consensual private reprimands and three consensual public reprimands.

Referral to OLR Investigation or Litigation

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 Investigation. If an attorney declines to agree to a consensual reprimand offered at Intake, the matter can move directly to Litigation pursuant to SCR 22.09(5). In FY 2025-26, Intake referred 84 grievances (3.7% of all matters) to Investigation or Litigation, which is a decrease from recent years.

OLR Investigation

Investigation Manager

Emily E. Kokie

J.D., Richmond, 1998

Investigative Counsel

Carousel Bayrd

J.D., Minnesota, 2000

Lorry Eldien

J.D., Wisconsin, 1989

(retired February 2026)

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 Cole McAndrew

Supreme Court Rule 22.03 lays out OLR’s investigative powers and duties, including the power of OLR to compel a lawyer’s cooperation with an investigation.

Under SCR 22.03, if a lawyer does not promptly provide a full and fair response to the initial notice of investigation, or otherwise fails to cooperate at any time during the investigation, their license is automatically suspended under SCR 22.03(4). Under SCR 22.03(2), OLR may also compel a lawyer to appear for an investigative interview or to provide documents and information to OLR, and SCR 22.03(8) authorizes OLR to subpoena information and materials from lawyers and third parties.

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). Between January 1 and June 30, 2026, OLR presented six requests for review to the Committee. The Committee affirmed OLR’s dismissal of all six matters.

Investigation Statistics & Dispositions FY 2025-2026*

Active Investigation Matters (6/30/26)	130
New Investigation Matters	48
Total Investigation Dispositions	93
Referred to Litigation	28
Consensual Reprimand**	11
Dismissed/De Minimis Dismissal	29
Hold Pending Reinstatement	12
Placed on Investigation Hold***	13

* These statistics were generated from January 1 through June 30, 2026, the first full quarters after implementation of Actionstep.

**A single consensual reprimand may encompass multiple grievance/inquiry matters.

***Hold pending resolution of a related OLR matter or underlying legal matter that may be dispositive of the investigation or inhibits further investigation until resolved.

If the lawyer's conduct warrants the suspension or revocation of their license, or a reprimand that isn't appropriate for a consent proceeding, 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 evidence – to one of the Committee's two panels. After OLR's presentation and an opportunity for the panel to ask questions, the Committee panel meets in closed sessions to deliberate and decide on 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 a 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.

**Non-Cooperation Suspensions - SCR 22.03(4)
FY 2025-2026***

Respondents Served Non-Cooperation Notices**	12
Respondents Cooperated Following Service	9
Respondents Suspended for Non-Cooperation	3
Respondents Remained Suspended	3
Respondent Reinstated from Earlier Suspensions	1

** These statistics were generated from January 1 through June 30, 2026, the first full quarters after implementation of Actionstep.*

***Some Respondents were served with Non-Cooperation Notices encompassing more than one investigation matter.*

SCR 22.03(4), the automatic suspension for non-cooperation rule, continues to be an effective tool to encourage cooperation with OLR investigations. In addition to encouraging cooperation, a suspension under SCR 22.03(4) also protects the public when a lawyer is functionally unable or unwilling to cooperate with OLR, but will not take the necessary steps to demonstrate an inability to cooperate.

For example, a respondent was suspended in 2025 for non-cooperation in two investigations, including an investigation of credible evidence that the lawyer was suffering from a medical incapacity that posed a danger to the public. During the first quarter of 2026, that respondent fully cooperated in the relevant investigations and OLR then worked with that lawyer to reinstate their license.

OLR Litigation

Deputy Director

Francis X. Sullivan

J.D., Wisconsin, 2000

Assistant Litigation Counsel

Kim Kluck

J.D., Florida State, 1994

Tom Laitsch

J.D., Chicago-Kent, 1994

John Payette

J.D., Wisconsin, 1995

Legal Associate

Veronika Sauer

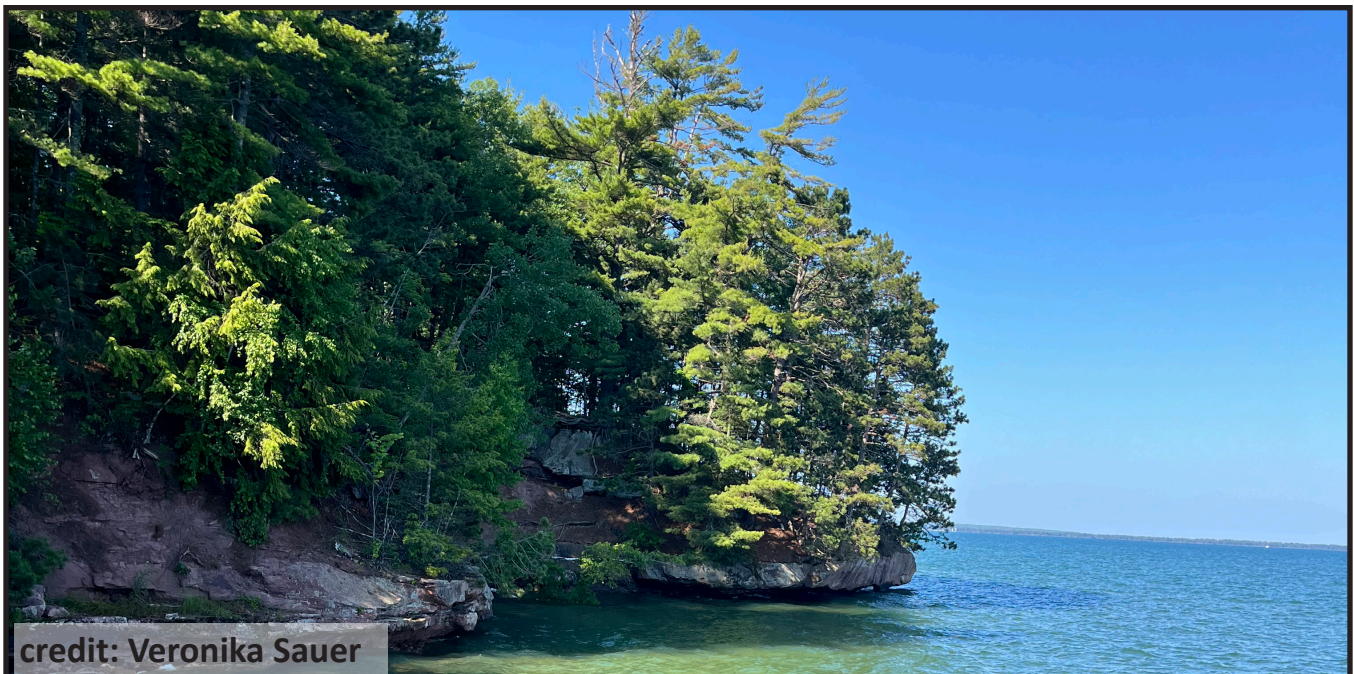
Once the Preliminary Review Committee determines that OLR has established cause to proceed in a matter, the Litigation team prepares and files a complaint with the Supreme Court that alleges professional misconduct or medical incapacity. Once OLR files proof of service, the Supreme Court appoints a referee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

and recommendation. 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.



credit: Veronika Sauer

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 F. Dallet
Justice Brian K. Hagedorn
Justice Janet C. Protasiewicz
Justice Susan M. Crawford
Justice Chris Taylor

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 second term expires September 30, 2028.

Ms. Wendie Witzke (Vice Chair) 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.

Attorney Heather Amos is corporation counsel for St. Croix County. She earned her J.D. from Hamline University School of Law in 2007. Her first term expires September 30, 2028.

Attorney Michael F. Bartzen is General Counsel 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.

Commissioner Brian Bushaw serves as court commissioner in Outagamie County. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 2004. His first term expires September 30, 2028.

Attorney Robert Dean is deputy general counsel and risk officer for Fox Communities Credit Union in Appleton. He earned his J.D. from the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law in 1997. His first term expires September 30, 2028.

Mr. Bruce Hutler is a public member and a partner at the accounting firm of Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP. His first full term expires September 30, 2028.

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 second term expires September 30, 2028.

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.

Ms. Sara MacDonald is a public member who has worked as a social work 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 first term expires September 30, 2028.

Attorney Kathleen Pakes 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 second term ends September 30, 2028.

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.

Appendix 3 - Preliminary Review Committee

Attorney Duffy Dillon (Chair) 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.

Attorney Amy F. Scholl (Vice Chair) 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 Jean C. Baker 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.

Commissioner Andrea Bolender serves as court commissioner in Milwaukee County. She earned her J.D. from Marquette University Law School in 2017. Her first term expires September 30, 2028.

Attorney Donald A. Daugherty, Jr. 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.

Mr. Patrick Delmore is a public member who works as an instructor in the education department of Edgewood College. He earned his B.S. and M.S. from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, and his Ph.D. from University of Wisconsin – Madison. His first term expires September 30, 2028.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Ms. Christine Procknow is a public member who serves as a senior social worker for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. She earned her B.S. from the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh in 2002. Her first term expires September 30, 2028.

Attorney Gerald Sternberg is an attorney based in Madison. He earned his J.D. from the New England School of Law in 1976. His second term expires September 30, 2028.

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 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. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1989.

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 has retired from Woehrer Law Office in Wauwatosa, but still takes occasional independent legal work regarding wills and estates. He earned his J.D. from the University of Wisconsin School of Law in 1987.

Appendix 5 - Special Preliminary Review Panel

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

Assistant Attorney General Eliot M. Held 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 second 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 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 second term expires September 30, 2028.

Appendix 6 - Supreme Court-Appointed Referees

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. 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.

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 2025-2026

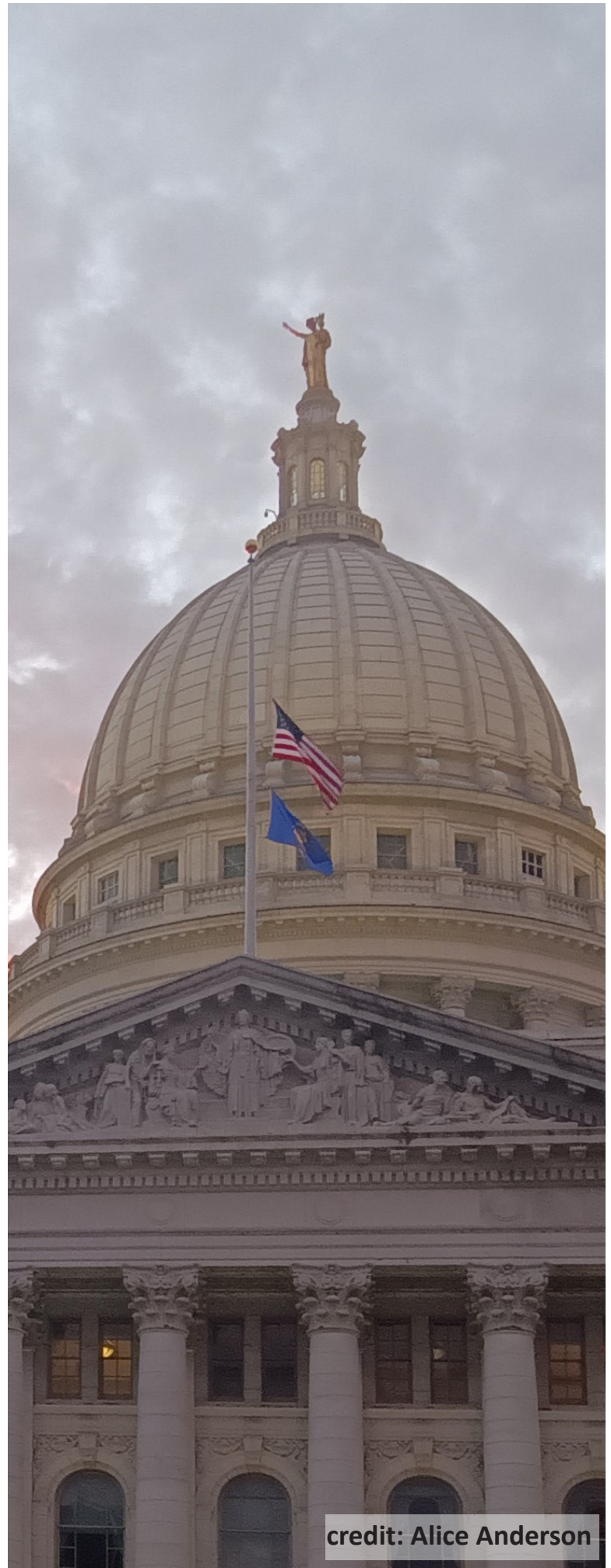
Date	Type	Title/Location	OLR Staff
8/1/25	CLE	Complainant “Standing” Rules: Good Policy or a Solution Looking for a Problem? (Chicago, National Organization of Bar Counsel)	Francis Sullivan
9/3/25	CLE	Stress Management Through Better Practice Management - Chris Shattuck (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke
10/3/25	CLE	Ethics School (Madison College, Madison)	Rita Knauss Michael Shull Tom Laitsch Francis Sullivan Emily Kokie
10/10/25	CLE	Annual Trust Account Update (Virtual, OLR)	Travis Stieren Emily Kokie
10/16/25	CLE	Ethics School (Chippewa Valley Technical College, Eau Claire)	Rita Knauss Michael Shull Tom Laitsch Francis Sullivan Emily Kokie
10/17/25	CLE	Ethics School (Northcentral Technical College, Wausau)	Rita Knauss Michael Shull Tom Laitsch Francis Sullivan Emily Kokie
11/6/25	CLE	Ethics School (Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Green Bay)	Rita Knauss Michael Shull Tom Laitsch Francis Sullivan Emily Kokie
11/7/25	CLE	OLR 101 (Ozaukee Co. Court Commissioners, Port Washington)	Timothy Samuelson
11/12/25	Publication	<u>Ethical Dilemma: Handling Trust Accounts Without Checks</u>	Travis Stieren
11/12/25	CLE	Nutrition for Resilience - Allan Mottram (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke
11/12/25	CLE	Ethical Implications of Working with Non-Lawyer Staff and Other Lawyers (Stafford Rosenbaum, Madison)	Emily Kokie
11/14/25	CLE	OLR Grievances (Wisconsin Dept. of Justice, Green Bay)	Timothy Samuelson
12/8/25	CLE	Leading with Engagement - Laurie Lyte (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke

Date	Type	Title/Location	OLR Staff
12/11/25	CLE	2025 Ethics for Government Attorneys: Attorney Disciplinary Proceedings with Case Studies (Wisconsin Dept. of Justice, Virtual)	Emily Kokie
1/21/26	CLE	Leading Well in Law - Paula Davis (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke
2/12/26	CLE	What Remedies? (San Antonio, National Organization of Bar Counsel)	Timothy Samuelson
2/24/26	CLE	Ethics: UW Law Days (Virtual)	Timothy Samuelson Francis Sullivan
2/25/26	CLE	We're Human Too! Acknowledging and Managing Trauma - Miriam Falk (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke
3/20/26	CLE	Strategies for Managing the Mania - Joseph Bugni (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke
4/23/26	CLE	Master Your Money: Managing Finances to Support Attorney Well-Being - Rho Thomas (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke
5/11/26	CLE	Why Practice? Aligning Your Process with Your Purpose - John Schneider (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke
5/14/26	CLE	An Overview of OLR Matters: Process, Outcomes and the Basis for Discipline (State Public Defenders, Virtual)	Emily Kokie Michael Shull
5/15/26	CLE	Building an Ethical Career: Challenges Facing Today's Legal Professionals & OLR Hot Topics (Paralegal Association of Wisconsin Annual Seminar, Wisconsin Dells)	Emily Kokie
5/21/26	CLE	An Overview of OLR Matters: Process, Outcomes and the Basis for Discipline (Association of County Corporation Counsel, Appleton)	Francis Sullivan
6/17/26	CLE	Regulating the Practice of Law in Wisconsin (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Milwaukee)	Timothy Samuelson
6/25/26	CLE	More Than Minutes: Time Management Strategies for Sustainable Legal Success - Emily Stedman (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke
6/30/26	CLE	We're Human Too! Session 2 - Miriam Falk (Virtual Lunch/Learn, OLR)	Julie Spoke

Office of Lawyer Regulation
Director Timothy C. Samuelson

Board of Administrative Oversight
Chairperson Rene L'Esperance

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