



Ohio Board of Professional Conduct

2025 Annual Report





To the Chief Justice and Justices of the Ohio Supreme Court, Members of the Ohio Bar, and Members of the Public,

In accordance with Gov.Bar R. V, I present this annual report on behalf of the Board of Professional Conduct. This annual report provides a summary of the financial activity of the Board for the fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) and the Board’s adjudicating activity for the calendar year 2025 (January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025).

This annual report summarizes the work of the 28 volunteer commissioners and the Board’s three-person staff to promote and enforce the high standards of professional ethics established by the Supreme Court. Commissioners and staff are honored to serve the Supreme Court, the legal profession and the citizens of Ohio to assist in the delivery of justice for all. As the costs of the pursuance of grievances by the certified grievance committees and of the Board, itself, are borne by the bar through attorney registration fees paid biennially to the Supreme Court and deposited into the Attorney Services Fund, we recognize the importance of good stewardship of these funds.

This report also reflects 2025 – 2026 as a period of transition. The longest serving director in the history of the Board, Richard A. Dove, retired, after a distinguished career. Now, fittingly, we move forward into a new era as we also celebrate our country’s 250 years as a democratic republic. The Board also looks forward to celebrating 70 years of service in 2027.

Recent institution of electronic filing of the Board recommendations and hearing record with the Clerk of the Court for the Ohio Supreme Court has increased accessibility and created efficiencies. Electronic submission of data and reimbursement requests from the certified grievance committees will allow better analysis of the grievance process for both the Board and the certified grievance committees. Coordination with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel in the gathering of its data also will assist in the analysis of the effectiveness of the disciplinary process.

Modernization of these processes along with open and transparent communication to all participants about the processes will create further confidence in an otherwise well-run disciplinary system and in the third branch of government.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth T. Smith

Director, Ohio Board Of Professional Conduct

A Lawyer's Oath

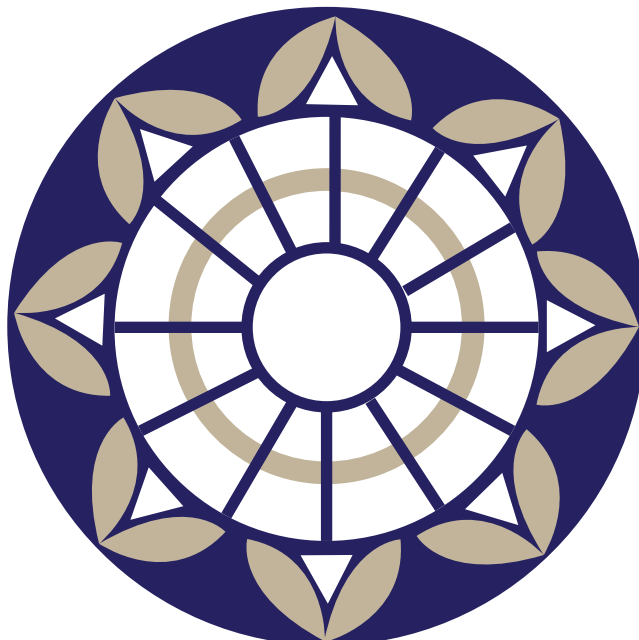
I hereby swear that I will support the Constitution and the laws of the United States and the Constitution and the laws of Ohio, and I will abide by the Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct. In my capacity as an attorney and officer of the Court, I will conduct myself with dignity and civility and show respect toward judges, court staff, clients, fellow professionals, and all other persons. I will honestly, faithfully, and competently discharge the duties of an attorney at law. So help me God.

A Judge's Oath

I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Ohio, will administer justice without respect to persons, and will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all of the duties incumbent upon me as judge according to the best of my ability and understanding. This I do as I shall answer unto God.

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Overview of the Board

Its Importance to the Profession and to Democracy

“Lawyers play a vital role in the preservation of society....An independent legal profession is an important force in preserving government under law, for abuse of legal authority is more readily challenged by a profession whose members are not dependent on government for the right to practice.”

–Preamble: A Lawyer’s Responsibilities, Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct, ¶15

Ohio has a robust disciplinary system, one that is self-regulating and places the protection of the public at the forefront. Protection of the public is protection of the rule of law and therefore, of democracy. When lawyers and judges abide by the solemn oaths they take, the independence and integrity in the third branch of government is preserved.

Authority and Independence of the Board As Adjudicator of Grievances

The Ohio Constitution, specifically, Oh. Const. Art. IV, Sec. 2, provides that the Supreme Court of Ohio has original jurisdiction for the admission to the practice of law, attorney discipline and “all other matters relating to the practice of law.”

The Supreme Court, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Ohio Constitution also has jurisdiction over the conduct of the judiciary. Oh. Const. Art. IV, Sec. 5. The Supreme Court has promulgated standards governing both attorney conduct: The Rules of Professional Conduct, and the judiciary: The Ohio Code of Judicial Conduct.

The Supreme Court established the Board of Commissioners on Grievances and Discipline in 1957 and renamed it the Board of Professional Conduct in 2014. The Board of Professional Conduct is the second oldest board created in Ohio. It was created to assist the Supreme Court in executing its plenary and constitutional authority to regulate the practice of law. Its twenty-eight members constitute an adjudicator of complaints, independent of the Supreme Court but subject to ultimate review by and appeal to the Court.

The Board of Professional Conduct serves as the adjudicator of complaints filed with it only after thorough investigation by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, certified grievance committees of local bar associations, or the Ohio State Bar Association. It then makes recommendations to the Supreme Court of Ohio as to whether violations have occurred and of the appropriate sanction. Sanctions can range from a public reprimand to permanent disbarment. The Board also considers petitions from lawyers who are seeking to be reinstated to the practice of law following indefinite or impairment suspensions and conducts hearings in expedited judicial campaign misconduct cases.

The Board is given its authority for procedure and sanction in Rule V of the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio and Rules II and III of the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Judiciary of Ohio.

Other Responsibilities of the Board

The Board also has a significant role in promoting and enhancing compliance with the standards of professional ethics by members of the Ohio Bench and Bar. The Board is responsible for certifying the grievance committees of the bar associations to ensure that they are upholding the objectives of the disciplinary process through advising attorneys, reviewing and investigating grievances, and prosecuting grievances which are determined to demonstrate probable cause. The Board is also responsible for reimbursing the certified grievance committees and tracking costs associated with processing, investigating, and prosecuting grievances. The costs of the investigating and prosecuting grievances by the certified grievance committees and Disciplinary Counsel and of the Board, itself, are borne by the Ohio bar through attorney registration fees paid biennially to the Supreme Court and deposited into the Attorney Services Fund.

The Board has authority to issue nonbinding advisory opinions regarding prospective or hypothetical application of the rules governing the professional conduct of lawyers and judges. Staff also makes numerous presentations each year at professional conferences and education seminars and responds daily to telephone and email inquiries from lawyers, judges, judicial candidates, the media, and members of the public.



The Commissioners

Holding the Bench and Bar to the Highest Standards

“Therefore, all lawyers should devote professional time and resources and use civic influence to ensure equal access to our system of justice for all those who because of economic or social barriers cannot afford or secure adequate legal counsel. A lawyer should aid the legal profession in pursuing these objectives and should help the bar regulate itself in the public interest.”

—Preamble: A Lawyer’s Responsibilities, Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct, ¶6



2025 Commissioners and Staff

Row 1 (front): Vito Abruzzino, Judge Rocky Coss, Judge Eugene A. Lucci, Teri Daniel, Carolyn Taggart, Faith Long, Allan Asbury, Elizabeth Smith.

Row 2: Judge Kevin Braig, Danielle Parker, Elizabeth Cary, Lori Herf, Ken Peller, Tony Schroeder, Dave Shroyer, Judge Andrew King.

Row 3: Joseph Marinucci, Frank DeSantis, Lee Johnson, Richard Creighton, Margaret Murray, Judge Chris Cook, Kurt Kaufman, Ted Lesiak, Aleatha Carver, Patrick McLaughlin.

Missing: Pablo Castro, Judge Adolfo Tornichio, Tom Green, Judge Candace Crouse, George Brinkman.

A Board of Volunteers

Giving of their personal and professional time, 28 volunteer commissioners are appointed to the Board for staggered three-year terms by the Supreme Court and are from all 12 appellate districts in Ohio. The membership includes four nonlawyers who represent the public, seven trial and appellate judges, and 17 lawyers from varying practice backgrounds. Each commissioner devotes approximately 30 days or more per year to his or her Board responsibilities, including presiding over hearings, preparing reports and serving on committees. They come from different size practices and courts and diverse areas of practice, jurisdiction, and professions. They are “reasoned” professionals for the Rules of Professional Conduct are “rules of reason,” Preamble, ¶14, and thus, each commissioner brings his or her experience to the recognition of the standards that must be upheld to protect the public.

Chair



Teri R. Daniel is an assistant prosecutor in Lake County. Commissioner Daniel was elected Chair of the Board in December, 2025 upon the retirement of Chair Patrick McLaughlin. Daniel was appointed to the Board in 2018 and is in her third term.

Vice Chair



Richard L. Creighton joined the Board in 2025 and was elected Vice-Chair in December, 2025. Commissioner Creighton is a senior partner and business litigation lawyer with the firm of Keating Meuthing and Klekamp PLL. He served for several years on the Board on The Unauthorized Practice of Law of the Supreme Court of Ohio and on the Grievance Committee for the Cincinnati Bar Association.

The Attorney Members

Vito J. Abruzzino was appointed to a vacancy in 2022 as an attorney commissioner from the Seventh District and serves on the Advisory Opinion Committee. Commissioner Abruzzino is the prosecuting attorney for Columbiana County.

Aletha M. Carver is a mediation attorney with the Fifth District Court of Appeals in Canton who was appointed to the Board in 2021. She is a member of one of two Probable Cause Panels.

Elizabeth E. Cary joined the Board in 2020 and is an associate in the Business Litigation and Labor & Employment Practice Groups with Bailey Cavalieri LLC in Columbus. She is a member of the Advisory Opinion Committee.

Pablo A. Castro joined the Board in 2024. He is a former magistrate for the Cleveland Municipal Courts and is currently practicing law in the areas of criminal defense and personal injury in Cleveland. He serves on the Advisory Opinion Committee.

Frank R. DeSantis was appointed as an attorney-commissioner from the Eighth District in 2022. He is a retired partner in the Cleveland office of Thompson Hine and is a member of one of the two Probable Cause Panels.

Thomas M. Green is a litigation partner with the Dayton law firm of Green & Green, representing individuals and businesses. He joined the Board in 2018 and serves on one of the two Probable Cause Panels.

D. Lee Johnson was appointed to his first full term in January, 2025. He is an attorney with Johnson & Associates, practicing in the area of personal injury law. He serves on the Rules Committee.

Kurt A. Kaufman is a solo practitioner in Lima and St. Mary's with a broad practice focusing on personal injury, DUI & DUS, divorce, wills and estate, and wrongful death. He was appointed to the Board in 2023 and serves on the Budget and Personnel Committee.

Theodore J. Lesiak is a principal with Roderick Linton Belfance LLP and is a litigator in various areas including employment, public and government law and personal injury defense. He joined the Board in 2025 and serves on the Rules Committee.

Michael O'Donnell is a partner with the Frantz Ward law firm representing corporate clients in a wide variety of complex litigation. He joined the Board in January, 2026.

Michael O'Neill is an attorney with the Gary F. Franke Co., LPA practicing in the area of criminal defense, litigation and personal injury. Commissioner O'Neill joined the Board in January, 2026.

Danielle M. Parker joined the Board in 2020 as a representative of the Fourth District. Commissioner Parker is chief of the civil division of the Scioto County Prosecutor's Office and serves on the Advisory Opinion Committee.

Kenneth E. Peller was appointed as a commissioner in 2020, representing the Twelfth District. Before joining the Board, Commissioner Peller served as bar counsel for the Warren County Bar Association. He is a member of one of the two Probable Cause Panels.

David A. Shroyer is a partner in the Columbus firm of Colley, Shroyer and Abraham where he focuses on personal injury and medical negligence litigation. Before becoming a private practitioner in 1989, he was an assistant county prosecutor and Assistant U.S. Attorney. He commenced his Board service in 2024 and serves on the Rules Committee.

Jeffery M. Smith is a partner with Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick in Toledo, Ohio, focusing on litigation and disputes service. Commissioner Smith joined the Board in January, 2026.

The Judiciary Members

Hon. Kevin P. Braig joined the Board in 2023. He has served as a judge of the Logan County Court of Common Pleas since 2019. He serves on the Budget and Personnel Committee.

Hon. Rocky A. Coss was first appointed to the Board in 2016 and chairs the Budget and Personnel Committee. Judge Coss has served on the Highland County Court of Common Pleas since 2008, and before taking the bench, he served six terms as the prosecuting attorney for Highland County.

Hon. Marisa Cornachio joined the Board in January, 2026 and is in her second term as judge of the Willoughby Municipal Court.

Hon. D. Chris Cook served as chair of the Board in 2023 and now serves as chair of the Advisory Opinion Committee. He is in his second term as judge on the Lorain County Court of Common Pleas, and previously served as bar counsel for the Lorain County Bar Association. Commissioner Cook joined the Board in 2018.

Hon. Candace C. Crouse is a judge on the First District Court of Appeals in Cincinnati and previously had a litigation practice focused on immigration, domestic relations, personal injury, and constitutional law. Judge Crouse was appointed in 2021 and serves on one of the two Probable Cause Panels.

Hon. Andrew J. King is the presiding judge of the 5th District Court of Appeals. He was appointed to the Board of Professional Conduct in 2025. He serves on the Advisory Opinion Committee.

Hon. Adolfo A. Tornichio was appointed to the Board in 2019 and is chair of the Rules Committee. He has been a judge in Greene County since 2015.

The Public Members

Lori A. Herf was appointed in 2019. Commissioner Herf serves on the Rules Committee. She is senior government affairs advisor in the Columbus office of Baker Hostetler.

Joseph Marinucci is a retired business executive and nonprofit leader from Cuyahoga County. He was appointed to his initial term on the Board in 2024 and serves on the Budget and Personnel Committee.

Andrew M. Rose serves as the Administrator of Concord Township in Lake County, Ohio. Commissioner Rose joined the Board in January, 2026.

Tony J. Schroeder was appointed as a public member of the Board in 2024. He is the owner of an independent insurance agency in Putnam County and serves on the Budget and Personnel Committee.

Retirements From the Board in 2025

We recognize and thank those who retired from the Board at the end of 2025:

Patrick M. McLaughlin (appt'd. 2017, chair, 2025)

George Brinkman (appt'd. 2019)

Hon. Eugene A. Lucci (appt'd. 2023)

Carolyn A. Taggart (appt'd. 2017)

Margaret M. Murray (appt'd. 2023)

The Board Staff

Reflecting on the Past and Looking to the Future

Board staff currently consists of three full-time positions. The director is the Board's chief legal and administrative officer and is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Supreme Court. The director is responsible for employing staff to assist the Board in executing its responsibilities. Staff positions currently include a deputy director/senior counsel and a case management clerk.

This past year saw the retirement at the end of May of the longest serving director of the Board, Richard A. Dove. Mr. Dove served as director of the Board since 2011. Before coming to the Board, he served for more than 22 years on the staff of the Supreme Court of Ohio, the last four as Assistant Administrative Director. He has been recognized in Ohio and nationally and received numerous awards for his work in the area of judicial ethics, with a focus on judicial campaign conduct. He also published on the topic of judicial ethics. Mr. Dove was active in the professional organizations focused on the disciplinary process and education. Rick not only served as the administrator of a very efficient office but provided direction and insight to the Board as its Chief Legal Officer.

In the past several months, the Board has instituted the electronic filing of Board reports with the Supreme Court Clerk of Court, eliminating paper filing. The Board approved a new document retention schedule allowing for the destruction of several categories of documents which no longer had relevance, and were not necessary to the documentation of Board functions. Staff has implemented methods for the electronic submissions of expenses and costs by the certified grievance committees to allow for better tracking and analysis of expenses and costs. As well, quarterly statistics will be submitted electronically, allowing also for the tracking of trends and correlation with expenses.

The Board will continue to analyze and modernize its practices in order to ensure its function is efficient while maintaining its core functions of regulating the legal profession to protect the public and democracy.



Elizabeth T. Smith

DIRECTOR

Ms. Smith was appointed by the Justices of the Supreme Court and assumed her duties on August 4, 2025. Prior to her appointment, she was a litigation partner with Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease. As a trial attorney and litigator for 40 years, she has broad experience in the courtroom and before government agencies. She served on the Columbus Bar Association Professional Ethics Committee and the Supreme Court Board on the Unauthorized Practice of Law. She is a graduate of Heidelberg University and the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and is admitted to practice in Ohio, the United States District Court for the Southern and Northern Districts of Ohio and the United States Supreme Court.

D. Allan Asbury

DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND SENIOR COUNSEL

Since joining the staff in 2014, Mr. Asbury's work has focused on researching and drafting advisory opinions and ethics guides, providing ethics advice to Ohio judges, lawyers, and judicial candidates, and leading the Board's outreach and education efforts. His extensive legal experience includes more than nine years on the Supreme Court staff, including as secretary to the Board on the Unauthorized Practice of Law and administrative counsel, and 12 years as employment and labor counsel for a regional transit authority. Mr. Asbury received his undergraduate and law degrees from Capital University, and is admitted to practice in Ohio, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, and the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Asbury is a certified court manager through a program sponsored by the Institute for Court Management and the Ohio Judicial College.

Faith Long

CASE MANAGEMENT CLERK

Ms. Long joined the staff in 2008 and has served as case management clerk since 2018. Ms. Long has a bachelor of science degree in criminology from Tiffin University and a paralegal certificate. Ms. Long is responsible for the review, docketing, and distribution of case filings, maintenance of case files, preparation of materials for review by the Board's probable cause panels, scheduling hearings, drafting orders and monitoring compliance with financial disclosure requirements by more than 1,800 judges, magistrates, and judicial candidates. She also is responsible for processing reimbursement requests from commissioners, vendors, and certified grievance committees.

Budgets and Results

Operations Budget

The Operations Budget for the Board and Staff is set for the biennium in the odd numbered fiscal years. The funds are allocated from the Attorney Services Fund which is funded by the attorney registration fees paid in the even numbered years by active registered attorneys. In 2025, there was a significant decrease in the number of registered attorneys, from 44,223 in July 2025 to 42,962 by December 31, 2025. The number of active registered attorneys has fluctuated over the last 20 years to a high of 45,080 in 2026 and a low of 41,831 in 2007.

The Board operations budget has for a number of years operated at less than its budget projection, primarily due to a decrease in staffing since COVID.

This amount represents less than 10% of the entire amount allocated by the Court for the disciplinary process, which includes funding for the Certified Grievance Committees and the Office of Disciplinary Counsel.

Operations Budget and Expenditures

FY 2025 (JULY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025)

	Allocated	Spent	% Budget
Board Personnel	\$ 724,120.00	\$ 545,860.95	75.38%
Commissioner Per Diems	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 7,250.00	40.28%
Maintenance	\$ 187,000.00	\$ 88,830.36	47.50%
Telephone	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 993.88	
Postage	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 563.37	
Supplies and Materials	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,066.44	
Books, Subscriptions	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 220.93	
Commissioner Travel Reimbursement	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 32,111.11	
Hearing Expenses	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 28,023.40	
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 25,851.23	
Parking		\$ 6,000.00	
Staff Conferences and Travel		\$ 1,538.64	
Food for Board Meetings		\$ 6,927.98	
Software Maintenance		\$ 7,159.19	
Information Technology		\$ 2,645.42	
Professional Ass'n. Dues		\$ 1,580.00	
Equipment	\$ 0	\$ 0	47.50%
Operations Budget*	\$ 929,120.00	\$ 641,941.31	69.09%

* This number is .40 more than the DAS/OAKS number and can only be assumed to be a rounding error as all underlying numbers are correct.

The Board as Adjudicator

In calendar year 2025 the Board opened 44 new cases and disposed of 49 cases. It held 29 hearings on grievances and 1 hearing for reinstatement. It also decided six consent to discipline cases, and dismissed five complaints. There also were eight complaints that were not adjudicated due to the resignation of the respondent attorney. With each hearing, a three person panel makes findings of fact and conclusions of law, recommends an appropriate sanction, prepares a thorough report, and presents it to the Board for approval.

The Board held six bimonthly meetings to consider reports from the hearing panels and to review recommendations from Board Committees. The three standing committees of the Board, Budget and Personnel, Rules, and Advisory Opinions, met periodically in person or via teleconference.

Disciplinary Case Statistics

FY 2023 – 2025

Supreme Court Decisions	2023	2024	2025
(excluding defaults and reinstatements)	22	44	19
Sanction Imposed (excluding defaults)	2023	2024	2025
Public reprimand	3	5	3
Term suspension	16	28	15
Indefinite suspension	3	6	1
Disbarment	0	5	0
Dismissal	0	0	0
Court Action on Board-Recommended Sanction	2023	2024	2025
Imposed recommended sanction	18 (82%)	37 (84%)	13 (68%)
Modified recommended sanction	4 (18%)	7 (16%)	6 (32%)
Increased	2	3	5
Decreased	2	3	1
Court Action on Consent to Discipline Cases	2023	2024	2025
(cases in which the Board recommended acceptance)			
Accept with public reprimand	3	3	2
Accept with term suspension	1	3	3
Rejected and remanded	0	0	0
Default Cases	2023	2024	2025
Total defaults certified to SCO	6	1	5
Interim suspension imposed	4	0	5
Indefinite suspension imposed	0	4	2

The Board's Role in Regard to Certified Grievance Committees

Certified grievance committees are formed by a bar association, a group of bar associations, or the Ohio State Bar Association and certified by the Board for the purpose of receiving, investigating allegations of misconduct by judicial officers and attorneys as well as mental illness, alcohol and drug abuse, or disorder affecting judicial officers or attorneys. These committees also hire or retain bar counsel who must be certified by the Ohio Disciplinary Counsel.

Each committee must consist of no fewer than 15 persons, a majority of which are attorneys and at least 10% of the committee are nonattorneys. The committees are thus made up of volunteers who all are engaged in service to the bar and to the practice of law.

The committees may also apply for and receive reimbursement for various expenses relating to professional conduct enforcement. Reimbursement is from monies allocated from the Attorney Services Fund which derives its funding from attorney registration fees.

The reimbursement for fiscal year 2025 to the Certified Grievance Committees:

Operations Budget and Expenditures FY 2025 (JULY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025)

	Allocated	Spent	% Budget
Reimbursement Budget*	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 1,942,895.72	97.14%
Certified Grievance Committees**		\$ 1,923,805.65	
File Inventory Reimbursement		\$ 19,090.07	

** It should be noted that \$61,190 was returned to the Attorney Services Fund in recovery of disciplinary costs from respondents which is not reflected herein.*

*** OSBA received an annual reimbursement in Fiscal Year 2024 in the amount of \$72,131.53. However, the check was reissued in Fiscal Year 2025 and was charged against this fiscal year's budget.*

Consequently, the actual expenses for CGCs in FY 2025 was \$1,851,674.12, or 92.5% of the reimbursement budget for the CGCs for grievance activity.

For the fiscal year 2025 the amount of \$6,740,032 was allocated from the Attorney Service Fund to fund the entire disciplinary process which included funding in the amount of \$4,155,473 for the operation of the Office of the Ohio Disciplinary Counsel. Therefore, less than 30% of the budget allocated for the disciplinary process, \$1,942,896, was expended by the Board to reimburse 19 of the 31 local bar association certified grievance committees and the state bar association certified grievance committee for disciplinary-related activities.

Trends in Grievance Filings

This year saw a record number of grievances being filed over the last 10 years, 4306¹.

The majority of those grievances were filed with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, with fewer each year being filed with the local bar association certified grievance committees. The local bar association grievance committees, however remain a vital part of the disciplinary system, and provide local insight into local practice issues. Further, 111 of grievances filed with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel were transferred in calendar year 2025 to local certified grievance committees where Disciplinary Counsel had a conflict. It is important that grievants recognize that they do have a choice where to file and to have confidence that such grievances will be handled efficiently, fairly, and comprehensively.

Rule V Reimbursements Including Attorney File Inventories

FY 2025

Grievance Committee	Total
Akron Bar Association	\$ 159,622.64
Allen County Bar Association	\$ 1,237.44
Ashtabula County Bar Association	\$ 10,080.06
Butler County Bar Association	\$ 10,940.51
Cincinnati Bar Association	\$ 264,810.27
Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association	\$ 232,164.76
Columbiana County Bar Association	\$ 8,580.00
Columbus Bar Association	\$ 360,715.56
Dayton Bar Association	\$ 179,770.86
Erie-Huron-Ottawa Certified Grievance Committee	\$ 6,634.02
Findlay/Hancock County Bar Association	\$ 9,910.11
Lake County Bar Association	\$ 34,923.45
Lorain County Bar Association	\$ 35,706.99
Mahoning County Bar Association	\$ 55,826.24
Medina County Bar Association	\$ 0.00
Ohio State Bar Association	\$ 319,499.70
Stark County Bar Association	\$ 35,779.16
Toledo Bar Association	\$ 168,502.97
Trumbull County Bar Association	\$ 11,921.31
Warren County Bar Association	\$ 17,179.45
Total	\$ 1,923,805.50

1 As of February 28, 2026, a few certified grievance committees had not reported all of their grievance data, including two of the larger metropolitan certified grievance committees, Cleveland and Dayton. This information will be updated on the Board's website when it is complete.

File Inventory Reimbursements [Gov. Bar R. V, Section 8(F)]*

Columbus	\$ 11,088.75
Cleveland Metro.	\$ 4,770.30
Erie-Huron-Ottawa Ctys.	\$ 1,834.02
Clermont	\$ 1,397.00
Total	\$ 19,090.07
Grand Total	\$ 1,942,895.57

* *File inventory reimbursements are governed by Gov. Bar Rule V(26) and are for the expense of attorneys appointed to inventory abandoned client files.*

Disciplinary Case Statistics

FY 2023 – 2025

Respondent with Prior Discipline	2023	2024	2025
(includes discipline for misconduct and suspensions for non-compliance with CLE or attorney registration requirements.)	4 (18%)	14 (32%)	2 (11%)

License Reinstatements	2023	2024	2025
Upon application	9	8**	5
Upon petition: Granted	2	2	1
Upon petition: Denied	0	0	1
Upon petition: Withdrawn	0	0	0

** *One application for reinstatement was denied.*

Judicial Misconduct Cases (Board Dispositions)	2023	2024	2025
(includes all cases involving violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct when the respondent was a judicial officer or candidate at the time the misconduct occurred.)			
Rule V cases	3	3	3
Judicial campaign misconduct (expedited)	2	1	0
Dismissals	1	0	0
Total	6	4	3

Miscellaneous Disciplinary Dispositions	2023	2024	2025
Resignations with discipline pending accepted	9	11	11
Resignations with discipline pending denied	0	0	0
Interim remedial suspension imposed	2	2	1
Child support default suspension imposed	0	1	2
Interim felony suspension imposed	12	1	8
Impairment suspension imposed	2	1	0
Reciprocal discipline imposed	2	5	5

Disciplinary Case Statistics

FY 2023 – 2025

Top Six Disciplinary Offenses of 2025			2025
(based on total number of grievances opened for investigation and primary misconduct alleged)			
1. Neglect/failure to protect client's interest			20%
2. Judicial misconduct			8%
3. Excessive fee			6%
4. Misrepresentation/False Statement			5%
5. Personal Misconduct			4%
6. Failure to Maintain Funds in Trust			4%

	2023	2024	2025
Active Registered Attorneys	43,246	44,226	42,962
Awards to Victims of Lawyers by Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection	\$749,942	\$744,986	\$633,885

	2023 [†]	2024	2025
Total Grievances Filed	4,151	4,052	4,402
Disciplinary Counsel (ODC)	3,114 (75%)	3092 (76%)	3715(84%)
Certified Grievance Committees (CGC)	1,037 (25%)	960 (24%)	692 (16%) †
Dismissed after initial review by ODC	312 (8%)	354 (9%)	374 (9%)
Dismissed after initial review by CGC	334 (8%)	324 (8%)	392 (9%)
Total Grievances Investigated	3,505	3,374	3,537
Opened for Investigation by ODC	2,802 (68%)	2738 (68%)	3341 (78%)
Opened for Investigation by CGC	703 (17%)	636 (16%)	196 (5%)
New complaints filed with the Board	45	45	44

[†] 2023 totals do not reflect missing reports from Portage grievance committee.

^{††} Due to a late submission by the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, the number of grievances filed with the CGCs increased from 588 to 692. This increase is reflected only in the revisions to the total number of grievances filed and the related percentages handled by the CGCs and ODC.

Education And Outreach

Proactive Education and Public Understanding

Presentations

Staff made over 30 plus presentations last year, educating judges and magistrates on the Ohio Code of Judicial Conduct, judicial candidates and their families on the rules governing campaigning, and bar associations on the grievance procedures and current issues in the profession. Twenty-four of those presentations were for the purpose of continuing legal education. Staff also participated in the statewide annual training seminar, the Miller-Becker Seminar with the Akron School of Law. Staff also spoke at Inns of Court and plan other outreach to law students (see chart on the opposite page).

Informal Staff Guidance and Advisory Opinions

Staff responded with 19 informal staff letters to those seeking ethical guidance. Gov. Bar R. V also authorizes the Board to issue nonbinding advisory opinions that address prospective or hypothetical questions involving application of the Ohio Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar, Rules for the Government of the Judiciary, The Code of Judicial Conduct and the Rules of Professional Conduct. Over 40 years, hundreds of advisory opinions have been issued. Three advisory opinions were issued during calendar year 2025:

Opinion 25-01:

A lawyer may not disclose in an affidavit of disqualification filed with the Supreme Court that the lawyer or her client has filed a disciplinary grievance against the judge when the grievance has not been certified as a formal complaint by the Board of Professional Conduct.

Opinion 25-02:

A lawyer may acquire a mortgage against a client's real property to secure the payment of legal fees provided the terms of the agreement satisfy the requirements of Prof Cond. R. 1.8(a).

Opinion 25-03:

A judge must maintain administrative control over the contents of any written decision, opinion, judgment entry, or journal entry. Administrative control includes ensuring that, after the judge has signed or approved the document for filing, court staff do not make unilateral modifications to the document without the judge's further review and approval.

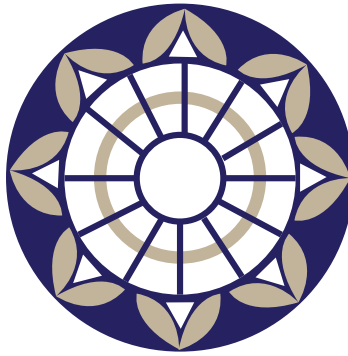
Daily, staff is available for telephone calls and emails from lawyers and judges seeking ethical guidance. Staff also counsels judges in regard to the preparation of the financial disclosure forms and issues of public records. Staff responds to over one thousand calls in a year.

In conclusion, Staff is always available to provide substantive guidance for ethical issues and to answer procedural questions about the process. Staff is dedicated to ensuring that Ohio's disciplinary system remains the best in the nation.

2025 Education & Outreach Presentations

Date	Event	Presenter
January 6, 2025	OSBA Ethics Committee	Asbury
March 12, 2025	Judicial Candidate Seminar	Asbury / Dove
March 14, 2025	DBA Probate CLE	Dove
March 26, 2025	New Magistrate Orientation (Ethics)	Dove / Hall
March 28, 2025	New Magistrate Orientation (Legal Advice)	Asbury
April 22, 2025	Toledo Bar Association - AI	Asbury
May 8, 2025	Cincinnati Bar Association - AI	Asbury
May 9, 2025	OACA	Dove
May 12, 2025	New Judge Orientation II	Asbury/Dove/Judge Heath
May 13, 2025	Judicial Family Network	Dove
May 21, 2025	Public CLE	Asbury
May 28, 2025	SCO Artificial Intelligence	Asbury
June 6, 2025	CBA Summer Associates -Ethics	Asbury
June 11, 2025	Judicial Candidate Seminar	Asbury
July 25, 2025	Juv. Clerks Association (Ohio Ethics Law)	Asbury
August 21, 2025	Judicial Candidate Seminar	Asbury
September 17, 2025	New Magistrate Orientation (Ethics)	Asbury / Hall
September 19, 2025	New Magistrate Orientation (Legal Info)	Asbury
October 15, 2025	Public CLE	Asbury
October 24, 2025	Miller-Becker Seminar	Smith / Asbury
November 7, 2025	Ohio Public Employees Lawyers Association	Asbury
December 3, 2025	Judicial Candidate Training	Smith / Asbury
December 5, 2025	Butler County Bar Association	Smith
December 8, 2025	New Judge Orientation I	Smith / Asbury / Judge Heath
December 8, 2025	Judicial Family Network	Smith
December 19, 2025	City Prosecutor Consortium	Asbury
December 21, 2025	Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas / FDS	Asbury
27 Total Presentations		





Appendices

APPENDIX A

Timeline for a Grievance

Herewith is the timeline for the filing of a grievance until it reaches the Supreme Court:

Grievance Filed	Day 1
Investigation to be Completed	No later than 270 Days (in exceptional circumstances an extension may be granted but for no longer than one year after investigation after grievance filed) (Gov. Bar R. V. (9)(D))
Decision Made by ODC or Grievance Committee Whether to Dismiss or Proceed	30 Days (Gov. Bar R. V. (9)(D))
Written Notice to Respondent of Intent to File or to Dismiss	No time limit but asap is recommended
Response to Written Notice of Intent to File	14 Days (Gov. Bar R. V. (10) (A) and (C))
Appeal by Grievant of Dismissal to ODC or Other Grievance Committee	14 Days (Gov. Bar R. V. (10) (D))
Decision on Appeal by ODC or Other Grievance Committee-Abuse of Discretion Standard	30 days (Gov. Bar R. V. (10) (D))
Complaint Prepared and Materials Separately Provided to Demonstrate Probable Cause	No time limit but asap is recommended (Gov. Bar R. V. (10) (F))
Probable Cause Panel Reviews Per Schedule Set in January of Each Year	(Gov. Bar R. V. (11)(A))
Probable Cause Determination by Probable Cause Panel of Three	No time limit but asap is recommended (Gov. Bar R. V. (11)(A))
If Probable Cause Not Found, CDC or Grievance Committee May Appeal to Board	7 Days (Gov. Bar R. V. (11)(D))
If Board Independently Finds No Probable Cause, No Appeal	(Gov. Bar R. V. (11)(D))
If Probable Cause is Found by the Panel or by the Board, Complaint is Certified by the Board and then Filed by the Relator	(Gov. Bar R. V. (11)(C)) and (D)
Respondent Answers Complaint	20 days from date of filing of complaint (Gov. Bar R. V. (12)(D))
Hearing Panel is Appointed	After time for answer has passed (Gov. Bar R. V. (12)(C))
Pre-Hearing Conference Held	20 days after answer is filed (BPC Reg. 8(A))
Pre-Hearing Scheduling Order	(BPC Reg. 8(B))
Exchange and file witness lists	56 days prior to hearing date
Completion of depositions and other discovery	28 days prior to hearing date
Exchange proposed exhibit lists and exhibits	21 days prior to hearing date
Objections to Proposed exhibits	14 days prior to hearing date
Response to Objections to proposed exhibits	7 days prior to hearing date
File hearing exhibits, witness lists, and stipulations	7 days prior to hearing date
HEARING	No more than 150 days following the appointment of the panel (BPC Reg. 8(B))
Panel Report Submitted to Director for Consideration at Next Scheduled Board Meeting	Within 40 days of the filing of the hearing transcript (BPC Reg. 8(D))
Board Approved Recommendation Filed with the Ohio Supreme Court	ASAP after Board Approves Panel Recommendation at a Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting

APPENDIX B

2025 Case Dispositions

Case Name and Number	County	Board Disposition Type	Board Disposition or Recommendation	Supreme Court Disposition or Status
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Richard J. Steinle, 2024-035</i>	Portage	Dismissal (resignation)	n/a	Resignation accepted, 2025-Ohio-93
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Nathan T. Harvey, 2024-013</i>	Gallia	Hearing	Indefinite suspension	Pending, Case No. 2025-0207
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Hon. John W. Rudduck, 2024-015</i>	Clinton	Hearing	Public reprimand	Pending, Case No. 2025-0203
<i>Columbus Bar Assn. v. Matthew B. Cable, 2024-016</i>	Hamilton	Hearing	One-year suspension, six months stayed	2026-Ohio-89
<i>Erie-Huron-Ottawa Cty. Bar Assn. v. Michael R. Bassett, 2024-019</i>	Ottawa	Consent-to-discipline	Six-month suspension, stayed	Six-month suspension, stayed, 2025-Ohio-1090
<i>Columbus Bar Assn. v. Glenn D. Dolfi, Jr., 2024-022</i>	Franklin	Dismissal (application of relator)	n/a	n/a
<i>Columbus Bar Assn. v. Richard F. Chambers II, 2022-007</i>	Franklin	Dismissal (reinstatement petition withdrawn)	n/a	n/a
<i>Ohio State Bar Assn. v. Jessica R. Walker, 2024-039</i>	Darke	Dismissal (resignation)	n/a	Resignation accepted, 2025-Ohio-900
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Ronald C. Taylor, Jr., 2024-020</i>	Out-of-state	Hearing	Eighteen-month suspension, one year stayed	Eighteen-month stayed suspension, 2025-Ohio-4832
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Clyde Bennett, II, 2024-031</i>	Hamilton	Dismissal (dismissed by Board)		
<i>Cleveland Metro Bar Assn. v. Erik S. Keister, 2024-033</i>	Cuyahoga	Consent-to-discipline	Public reprimand	Public reprimand, 2025-Ohio-1846
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Mark Mariotti, 2024-041</i>	Cuyahoga	Dismissal (resignation)	n/a	Resignation accepted, 2025-Ohio-2832
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Kenneth Grant Hawley, 2024-042</i>	Hamilton	Dismissal (default)	n/a	Indefinite default suspension, 2025-Ohio-2270
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Robin L. Green, 2024-045</i>	Licking	Dismissal (resignation)	n/a	Resignation accepted, 2025-Ohio-1210
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Ryan Richard Black, 2024-012</i>	Hocking	Hearing	Two-year suspension, six months stayed	Two-year suspension, six months stayed, 2025-Ohio-1790
<i>Columbus Bar Association v. Kristin Jocene Bryant, 2024-011</i>	Franklin	Hearing	Public reprimand	Public reprimand, 2025-Ohio-1879
<i>Dayton Bar Association v. William Thomas Daly, 2024-005</i>	Out-of-state	Hearing	Eighteen-month suspension, stayed	Eighteen-month suspension, 2025-Ohio-1624

Case Name and Number	County	Board Disposition Type	Board Disposition or Recommendation	Supreme Court Disposition or Status
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Jeffrey Dwight Hunter, 2023-035</i>	Fairfield	Hearing	Two-year suspension, six months stayed	Two-year suspension, six months stayed, 2025-Ohio-2406
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Hon. Russell Dee Kegley, 2024-014</i>	Scioto	Hearing	Public reprimand	Six-month suspension, stayed, 2025-Ohio-910
<i>Mahoning Cty. Bar Assn. v. Maurice Edward Graham, 2025-001</i>	Summit	Consent-to-discipline	Public Reprimand	Public reprimand, 2025-Ohio-4476
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Ronald Coleman Taylor, Jr., 2024-020</i>	Out-of-state	Hearing	Eighteen-month suspension, one year stayed.	Eighteen-month suspension, six months stayed, 2025-Ohio-4804
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Michael Thomas Callahan, 2024-044</i>	Summit	Dismissal (resignation)	n/a	Resignation accepted, 2025-Ohio-4930
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Norton, 2023-047</i>	Cuyahoga	Hearing	Two-year suspension, one year stayed	Two-year suspension, one year stayed 2025-Ohio-5091
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Hon. Timothy Joseph Grendell, 2022-045</i>	Geauga	Hearing	Eighteen-month suspension, one year stayed.	Eighteen-month suspension, one year stayed, 2025-Ohio-5239
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. William Anthony Paxton, 2025-005</i>	Out-of-state	Consent-to-discipline	One-year, stayed suspension	One-year, stayed suspension, 2025-Ohio-5220.
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Matthew Christopher Mollica, 2024-034</i>	Guernsey	Hearing	One-year, stayed suspension	One-year, stayed suspension, 2025-Ohio-5372
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Sterling Everard Gill, II, 2024-025</i>	Franklin	Hearing	Two-year, stayed suspension	Two-year, stayed suspension, 2025-Ohio-5392
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Cedric Preston Collins, 2024-026</i>	Fairfield	Hearing	Two-year, stayed suspension	Two-year, stayed suspension, 2025-Ohio-5393
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Gregg August Rossi, 2024-010</i>	Mahoning	Hearing	Six-month suspension	Six-month suspension, 2025-Ohio-5398
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Anthony James Fusco, 2024-008</i>	Mahoning	Hearing	One-year suspension, no credit for time served	Indefinite suspension, no credit for time served, 2025-Ohio-5397
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Elizabeth V. Westfall, 2025-017</i>	Franklin	Dismissal (resignation)	n/a	Resignation accepted, 2025-Ohio-5542
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Linda Chugh Ulinski, 2025-010</i>	Summit	Dismissal (resignation)	n/a	Resignation accepted, 2025-Ohio-5563
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Paige James McMahon, 2025-021</i>	Ross	Dismissal (resignation)	n/a	Resignation accepted, 2025-Ohio-5563
<i>Dayton Bar Ass'n v. Baker, 2024-029</i>	Montgomery	Hearing	One-year suspension, six-months stayed	Pending Case, 2025-0791
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Michael Duane Juhola, 2024-036</i>	Franklin	Hearing	Six-month suspension	Two-year suspension, eighteen months stayed, 2025-Ohio-5663

Case Name and Number	County	Board Disposition Type	Board Disposition or Recommendation	Supreme Court Disposition or Status
<i>Lorain Cty. Bar Ass'n v. James Terry Robinson, 2023-005</i>	Lorain	Reinstatement	Reinstate	Reinstated, 2025-Ohio-2821
<i>Columbus Bar Ass'n v. Javier Horacio Armengau, 2014-087</i>	Franklin	Hearing	Disbarment	Pending Case, 2019-0500
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Hon. Richard Steven Skelton, 2014-021</i>	Montgomery	Hearing	One-year, stayed suspension	Pending Case, 2025-1324
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Bruce Sanford Wallace, 2024-023</i>	Brown	Hearing	Six-month, suspension stayed	2026-Ohio-112
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Hon. Leslie Anne Celebrezze, 2024-024</i>	Cuyahoga	Hearing	Two-year suspension, one year stayed	2026-Ohio-45
<i>Cincinnati Bar Ass'n v. Mark Carter Eppley, 2024-028</i>	Hamilton	Hearing	One-year, stayed suspension	2026-Ohio-160
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Hon. Jon Marshal Ickes, 2024-032</i>	Sandusky	Hearing	One-year, stayed suspension	Pending Case, 2025-1323
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Jack Herchel VanBibber, 2024-038</i>	Union	Hearing	Two-year suspension	Pending Case, 2025-1640
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Darin Lynn Avery, 2024-040</i>	Richland	Consent-to-discipline	Public reprimand	Pending Case, 2025-1635
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Darnell Maurice Wilson, 2024-043</i>	Butler	Hearing	Six-month, stayed suspension	2026-Ohio-165
<i>Medina Cty Bar Ass'n v. Eric Dorman Hall, 2025-002</i>	Medina	Hearing	Six-month, stayed suspension	2026-Ohio-629
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Brian Nicholas Gernert, 2025-006</i>	Crawford	Hearing	Two-year, stayed suspension	2026-Ohio-529
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Arica Lynn Underwood, 2025-011</i>	Hamilton	Consent-to-discipline	Eighteen-month, stayed suspension	Eighteen-month, stayed suspension, 2026-Ohio-1634
<i>Disciplinary Counsel v. Joshua Adam Wilson, 2025-003</i>	Franklin	Dismissal (default)	n/a	Indefinite default suspension, 2025-Ohio-1927

Dispositions by Type

29	Hearing
1	Reinstatement
6	Consent to discipline
8	Resignation
2	Dismissal (default)
3	Dismissal (other)
49	Total Dispositions

