

---

FOR THE SUPREME COURT  
OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

---



**PRACTICE *of* LAW BOARD**

---

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR  
FISCAL YEAR 2024 (FY24)**

---

**Lesli Ashley**  
WSBA # 148LLLT  
Chair

## **I. ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY**

The Practice of Law Board (Board) is a Supreme Court board comprised of Court-appointed volunteers per Washington Court General Rule (GR) 25.<sup>1</sup> The Board is administered by the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) per GR 25(c) and GR 12.3.<sup>2</sup> Because WSBA administers the Board, this annual report covers WSBA fiscal year 2024 (FY24). It documents the Board's activities from Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024.

## **II. ROLE OF THE PRACTICE OF LAW BOARD**

GR 25(b) defines the Board's responsibilities as: educating the public about how to receive competent legal assistance (Educate); considering and recommending new avenues for persons not currently authorized to practice law to provide legal-and law-related services (Innovate); and receiving complaints alleging the unauthorized practice of law in Washington by any person or entity and referring such

---

<sup>1</sup> WA. Gen. R. 25, Practice of Law Board,  
[https://www.courts.wa.gov/court\\_rules/pdf/GR/GA\\_GR\\_25\\_00\\_00.pdf](https://www.courts.wa.gov/court_rules/pdf/GR/GA_GR_25_00_00.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> WA. Gen. R. 12.3, Washington State Bar Association Administration of Supreme-Court-Created Boards and Committees,  
[https://www.courts.wa.gov/court\\_rules/pdf/GR/GA\\_GR\\_12\\_03\\_00.pdf](https://www.courts.wa.gov/court_rules/pdf/GR/GA_GR_12_03_00.pdf).

complaints to the appropriate agency for appropriate action (Coordinate UPL).

In FY24, the Board focused on putting the plans developed in FY23 to work. To continue to advance the Board's uncompleted projects from prior years, some of these plans are being revised for FY25.

#### **A. ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS**

Per GR 25(f), the Board is to file a written report and meet with the Supreme Court each year.

The report must contain the following information: (a) Board roster, including any committees formed; (b) Board meeting agendas; (c) Short description of all UPL complaints received, the disposition of the complaint, and if applicable, the name of the agencies receiving the referral; (d) Progress report or copies of educational materials provided to the public; (e) Progress report on recommended new legal service providers or legal service delivery mechanisms; (f) Work plan for the fiscal year; and (g) Long-range work plan.

### **III. BOARD ROSTER**

Per GR 25(a), the Board has 13 members. A minimum of five members must be people not currently authorized to practice law. The Board refers to these members as public members. Members currently authorized to practice law are referred to as legal professional members.

#### **A. OVERALL BOARD COMPOSITION (FY24)**

##### **1. CHAIR**

During FY24, the Chair of the Board was Lesli Ashley. Chair Ashley is an active legal professional. Michael Cherry acted as Chair Emeritus for FY24 until his resignation in August 2024.

##### **2. MEMBERS NOT CURRENTLY AUTHORIZED TO PRACTICE LAW (PUBLIC MEMBERS)**

The following members of the Board in FY24 were not authorized to practice law: Dr. June Darling (2021-2024); Professor Drew Simshaw (Non-WA Barred Attorney | 2021-

2024;<sup>3</sup> Sharon Hytnen (2023-2026); Ellen Reed (2022-2025); and James Nguyễn (2023-2026). James Nguyễn's member position became vacant in FY24 leaving one vacant public member position.

### **3. MEMBERS AUTHORIZED TO PRACTICE LAW**

The following members of the Board in FY24 were authorized to practice law: Lesli Ashley (LLLT | 2021-2024); Sarah Bove (LLLT | 2021-2024); Rory Hardy (LLLT | 2023-2026); Kristina Larry (Attorney | 2022-2024); Ronald Satterthwaite (Attorney | 2023-2026); Craig Shank (Attorney | 2022-2025); Michael Terasaki (Attorney | 2023-2026); and Michael Cherry (Attorney | 2022-2025). Chair Emeritus Michael Cherry's member position became vacant in FY24, leaving one vacant licensed legal professional position.

### **4. LIAISONS WITH OTHER BOARDS**

Thea Jennings was the liaison with WSBA.

---

<sup>3</sup> Professor Drew Simshaw was considered a public member in FY24; however, the Board has since voted to re-classify Professor Simshaw as a lawyer member in FY25.

Citlalli Briseño was the liaison between the Board and the Access to Justice Board.

Governor Jordan Couch, At-Large was the liaison with the BOG.

## **B. NEW BOARD (FY25)**

### **1. CHAIR**

Lesli Ashley was nominated by the Board, approved by the BOG Nominations Committee, and appointed by the Supreme Court as Chair of the Board for FY25. Lesli is an active licensed legal professional. This will be Lesli's second year as Chair.

### **2. MEMBERS NOT CURRENTLY AUTHORIZED TO PRACTICE LAW**

These members of the Board for FY25 are not currently authorized to practice law: Sharon Josefy Hytnen (2023-2026); Ellen Reed (2022-2025); Melissa Kover (2024-2027); and Murugeshwari Subramanian (2024-2027). The Board has one open public member position to fill the seat vacated by James Nguyễn. A nomination is pending before the Court.

### **3. MEMBERS AUTHORIZED TO PRACTICE LAW**

These members of the Board for FY25 are authorized to practice law: Lesli Ashley (LLLT | 2024-2027); Rory Hardy (LLLT | 2023-2026); Ronald Satterthwaite (Attorney | 2023-2026); Craig Shank (Attorney | 2022-2025); Michael Terasaki (Attorney | 2023-2026); Prof. Drew Simshaw (Non-WA barred Attorney | 2024-2027; and Aaron VanderPol (Attorney | 2024-2027). The Board has one licensed legal professional position open to fill the seat vacated by Michael Cherry. A nomination is pending before the Court.

### **4. LIAISONS WITH OTHER BOARDS AND WSBA**

Thea Jennings will be the liaison with WSBA.

Citlalli Briseño will be the liaison between the Board and the Access to Justice Board. Michael Terasaki is the POLB liaison to the Access to Justice Board.

Governor Kristina Larry will be the liaison with the WSBA BOG.

#### **IV. BOARD AGENDAS**

The Board holds monthly meetings (quorum permitting).

##### **A. GENERIC AGENDA**

The basic agenda for Board meetings is approval of the minutes of the previous meeting and a review of work items in the Board's three areas of responsibility: education, innovation, and coordination of UPL complaints.

If there is a complaint alleging UPL to review, the Board meeting goes into executive session (Board members only) to determine the disposition of the complaint.

##### **B. MONTHLY AGENDAS**

Monthly agendas are posted on the WSBA website before each monthly meeting, and then replaced by the next



monthly agenda.<sup>4</sup> The Board minutes are available from the Board page of the WSBA website.<sup>5</sup>

## **V. EDUCATION**

In FY24, the Board published the Legal Checkup FAQ, originally published in English in FY22, in Spanish and Chinese. The Board also worked with WSBA to make the FAQ more accessible to the public by linking to the Legal Checkup FAQ on the WSBA webpage for the public that provides information on finding legal help. The Board hopes its work will increase access to and usage of the FAQ.

The Board began discussions with WSBA IT regarding development of an online Legal Checkup tool that would assist members of the public in determining if they have legal issues and guide them to available resources to address those issues. However, other resources and tools are now available that

---

<sup>4</sup> See: Practice of Law Board, available at <https://www.wsba.org/Legal-Community/Committees-Boards-and-Other-Groups/practice-of-law-board>.

<sup>5</sup> See: Practice of Law Board, <https://www.wsba.org/Legal-Community/Committees-Boards-and-Other-Groups/practice-of-law-board>.

address a similar need and audience in Washington as that envisioned by the Legal Checkup.<sup>6</sup> The Board has therefore decided to spend time over the next fiscal year reevaluating its role in educating the public, including assessing the ongoing need to develop a Legal Checkup tool.

## **VI. INNOVATION**

Over the last fiscal year, the Board worked in collaboration with the WSBA to prepare and submit a proposed order for implementing a pilot test of entity regulation to the Court.

Prior to finalizing the proposed order for submission to the Court, the WSBA and the Board broadly circulated a draft order and promoted the pilot project through a variety of channels, requesting feedback and comment through a designated email inbox. The WSBA Board of Governors and Board also held a joint in-person feedback session on

---

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/issues> and <https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/washington-forms-online>.

September 6, 2024. Revisions were then made to the order based on some of the feedback. Following the comment period, the Board approved the final proposed order to implement a pilot test, which was submitted to the Washington Supreme Court on September 27, 2024.<sup>7</sup>

## **VII. ALLEGED UPL COMPLAINTS IN FY24**

### **A. OVERALL COMPLAINTS**

The Board continued to refer complaints alleging the unlawful practice of law to appropriate agencies. During FY24, the Board received 32 complaints alleging UPL, the same number of complaints it received in FY23.

---

<sup>7</sup> On Dec. 5, 2024, the Washington Supreme Court entered an order authorizing a timebound, data-driven test of entity regulation. This will make up much of the Board's work in FY25.

At the end of FY24, a total of eight complaints were pending review. These complaints were resolved in early FY25.<sup>8</sup>

Twelve complaints were closed without a referral to any agency.

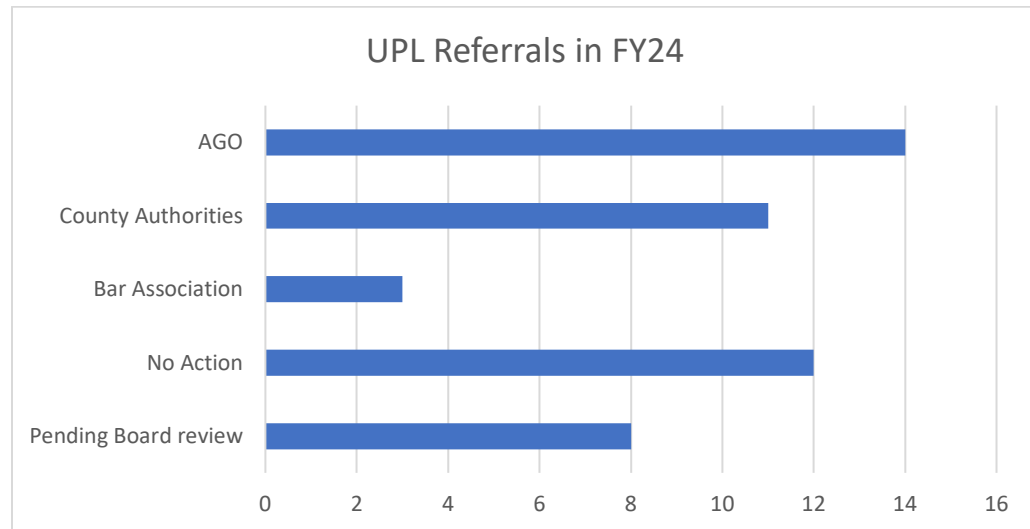
## **B. UPL REFERRALS**

Complaints were referred to various agencies including the Washington State Bar Association's Office of Disciplinary Counsel, the respective sheriffs' and prosecutors' offices in the counties where the complaints occurred, and other bar associations in other states. All complaints sent to county enforcement agencies were also forwarded to the Attorney

---

<sup>8</sup> Additional statistics provided in this section include data from the eight complaints that were received in FY24 but reviewed in FY25.

General's Office per their request for review for other statutory violations.<sup>9</sup> The following chart reflects UPL referrals.<sup>10</sup>



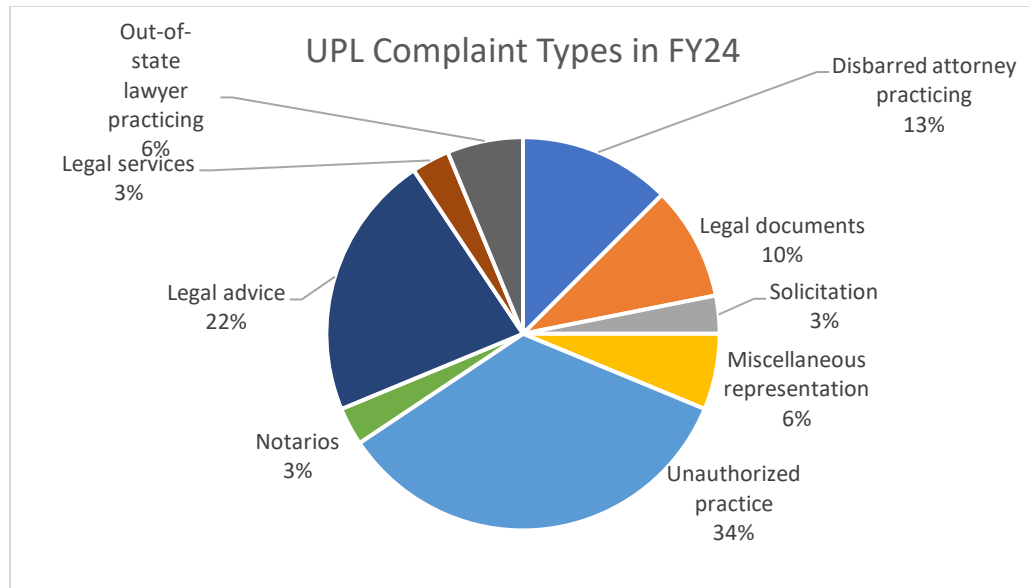
### C. UPL COMPLAINT TYPES

Again, this year, UPL complaints spanned several categories. Most often, the Board received complaints that alleged individuals gave legal advice, disbarred attorneys were practicing law, and individuals were engaged in unauthorized practice in Washington courts.

---

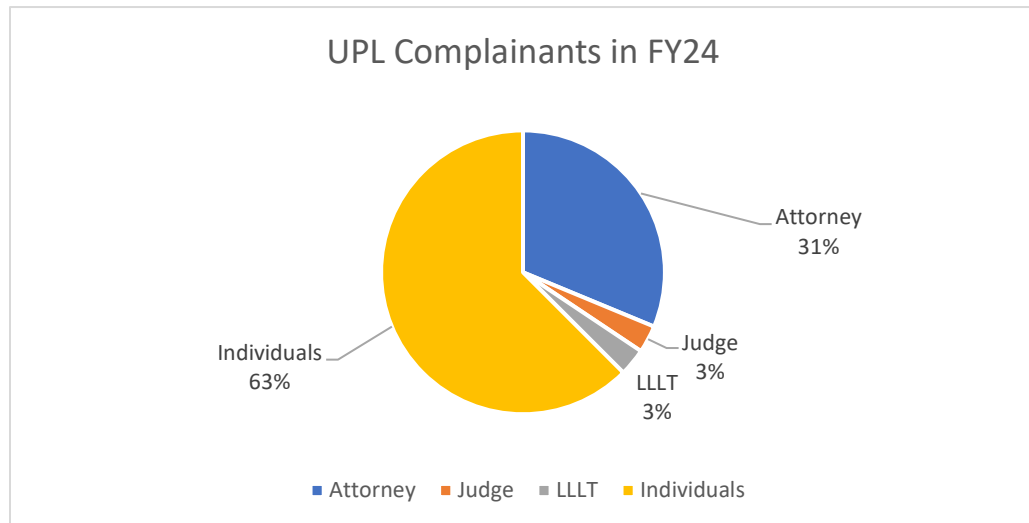
<sup>9</sup> For example, the AGO has been prosecuting matters which may qualify as UPL under the Washington's Immigration Services Fraud Prevention Act (RCW 19.154) available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.154>, and the Estate Distribution Documents Act (RCW 19.295) available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.295>.

<sup>10</sup> In this chart, complaints are counted twice where the complaint was referred to more than one category of enforcement agency.



#### **D. UPL COMPLAINANTS**

UPL complainants spanned several categories, including individuals and licensed legal professionals. The majority of UPL complaints were filed by individuals.



## **E. UPL ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (COORDINATION)**

As an offshoot of its Educate Up concept, the Board held a UPL summit in October 2023 with county sheriffs with the goal of improving education and outreach regarding UPL.

The Board prepared and approved proposed amendments to GR 24 for submission to the Supreme Court for its approval to update GR 24 in accordance with the statutory revision that puts all civil protection orders under a single statute.<sup>11 12</sup>

Finally, the Board continued to investigate whether UPL should be a per se violation of the Washington Consumer Protection Act. Representatives of the Board met with the Attorney General's Office twice regarding this issue. Ultimately, the Board determined that it would postpone further action unless the Court requests further exploration of the issue by the Board.

---

<sup>11</sup> RCW 7.105 Civil Protection Orders available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=7.105>.

<sup>12</sup> On December 5, 2024, the Court ordered publication of the proposed amendments with the comment period closing on April 30, 2025.

## **VIII. WORKPLANS**

### **A. EDUCATE**

As the Board noted in its last annual report, the Board has envisioned itself in a dual Education role, which the Board calls “Educate Up and Educate Out.”

Educate Up involves educating stakeholders, including the public, WSBA, and the courts about the market for legal services in Washington State. The goal of this education effort would be to understand the market for legal services and its impact on the access-to-justice gap. The Board’s work to administer the pilot project to test entity regulation will position it well to do this work throughout FY25 and the coming years.

Educate Out continues the ongoing work to educate the public about how to obtain competent legal services. In FY25, the Board will continue to discuss and reevaluate its role in educating the public, including assessing the ongoing need to develop an online Legal Checkup tool, and expects to make a final decision in the coming year. The Board also hopes to



make the Legal Checkup FAQ materials more widely available in multiple languages.

## **B. INNOVATE**

On Dec. 5, 2024, the Washington Supreme Court entered an order authorizing a timebound, data-driven test of entity regulation. Under Order 25700-B-721, the WSBA and Board will collaborate to implement and run the pilot under the supervision of the Court.

In FY25, the Board will begin its collaboration with the WSBA to implement the pilot project as ordered by the Court. Preliminary discussions have already begun regarding building a project plan for implementation, and the Board expects to begin its quarterly reporting to the Court on the pilot's operation at the end of the March 2025.

The Board is further exploring holding a virtual Regional Innovation Summit in collaboration with the WSBA. The goal of the Summit would be to convene other states implementing innovations in regulating the practice of law. Invites would be

extended to jurisdictions in the Ninth Circuit. Holding such a summit would assist the Board and WSBA in learning from other states considering or implementing regulatory reforms.

### **C. COORDINATE UPL**

The Board will continue to review and process UPL complaints to consider whether they are appropriate for referral to enforcement agencies. Also, as a continuation of last year's work to broaden access to the Legal Checkup FAQ, the Board wants to revise how UPL is reported and make forms more interactive and online, and available in multiple languages.

The Board will also continue to consider ways to best inform and effectively reach key stakeholders regarding UPL.

### **D. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

The Board continues to grow in diversity and be more inclusive as illustrated by the election of a chair who is a Limited License Legal Technician (LLLT) actively practicing law with under-represented individuals in the most rural and underserved areas of Washington state. The Board plans to

continue to work on recruiting diverse volunteers to the Board, and ensure they are included in the work of the Board.

## **IX. BUDGET**

For FY24, the budget for the Board was \$12,000 in direct expenses and \$76,560 in indirect expenses. After the budget reforecast, the budget was revised as follows: direct expenses were budgeted at \$12,000 and indirect expenses at \$84,860. As of September 30, 2024, the Board spent \$1,157 in direct expenses, and \$82,019 in indirect expenses.

## **X. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Board wants to acknowledge and thank our former LLLT member Sarah Bove, public member Dr. June Darling, and lawyer members Governor Kristina Larry and Chair Emeritus Michael Cherry for their service to the Board and the community. The Board benefited greatly from their membership.

The Board appreciates the time and guidance that the Justices of the Supreme Court have given the Board so the

Board can do its work and represent the Court and the judiciary positively in the view of the public.

The Board wants to acknowledge the hard work of Paralegal Emily Crane, former OGC Paralegal Kyla Reynolds, Assistant General Counsel Thea Jennings, General Counsel Laurie Powers, former General Counsel Julie Shankland, Chief Equity and Justice Officer Diana Singleton, Director of Advancement Kevin Plachy, Chief Regulatory Counsel Renata de Carvalho Garcia, Chief Disciplinary Counsel Douglas J. Ende, Chief Communications and Outreach Officer Sara Niegowski, Volunteer Engagement Advisor Paris Eriksen (for recruiting efforts), and Executive Director Terra Nevitt for their support of the Board and their day-to-day contributions to our work.

Governor Jordan Couch has also helped support the Board, especially in keeping the BOG up to date on the Board's work and in supporting the Board's efforts to propose an entity regulation pilot project to the Court.

Finally, the Board wants to thank the Court staff, particularly Reza Pazooki for helping us communicate with the Court and to the Justices of the Supreme Court for being gracious and offering us guidance and direction throughout the year.

**E. CONCLUSION**

The Board awaits any guidance from the Court to assist it in serving the Supreme Court in its mission.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this the 27<sup>th</sup> day of February 2025.

By: /s/ Lesli Ashley