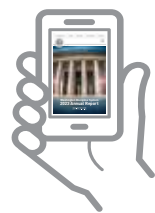


WSBA Discipline System Annual Report

Annually, the Washington State Bar Association publishes a report on Washington's discipline system. This report summarizes the activities of the system's constituents, including the WSBA's Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) and Office of General Counsel (OGC), the Disciplinary Board, hearing officers, and the Client Protection Fund. The report also provides statistical information about discipline for those licensed to practice law in Washington for the calendar year. These pages provide an informal overview of the 2023 Discipline System Annual Report.



MORE ONLINE

For more information on the WSBA discipline system go to www.wsba.org. To view the full 2023 Discipline System Annual Report, go to bit.ly/4aW13Zd.

STRUCTURE

How the Lawyer Discipline and Disability System Works

The Washington Supreme Court has exclusive responsibility and inherent authority over regulation of the practice of law in Washington. This authority includes administering the discipline and disability system. Many of the court's disciplinary functions are delegated by court rule to the WSBA, which acts under the supervision and authority of the court. Under the Supreme Court's mandate in General Rule 12.2, the WSBA is committed to administering an effective system of discipline in order to fulfill its obligations to protect the public and ensure the integrity of the profession. The prosecutorial and investigative functions of the discipline system are discharged by ODC, while the adjudicative functions are handled by the Disciplinary Board and hearing officers, which are administered by OGC.



BY THE NUMBERS > PART II



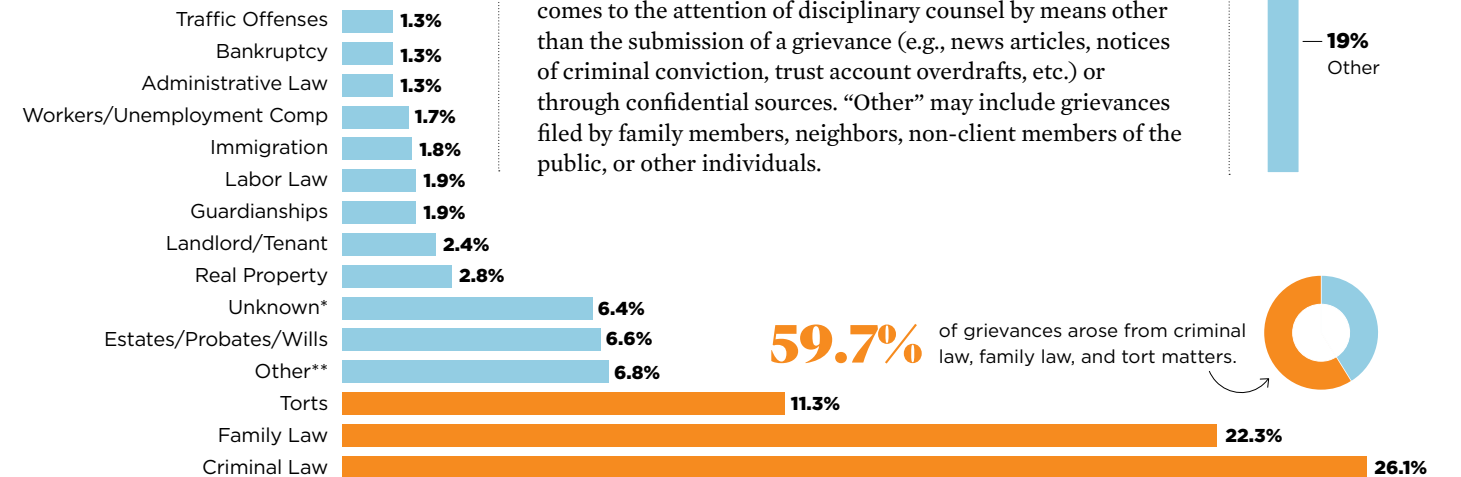
A CLOSER LOOK Number and Nature of Grievances

ODC's intake staff receives all phone inquiries and written grievances and conducts the initial review of every grievance.¹ After initial review, some grievances are dismissed, and others are referred for further investigation by ODC investigation/prosecution staff. Grievances that are not dismissed or diverted after investigation may be referred for disciplinary action. When warranted and authorized by a review committee of the Disciplinary Board, these matters are prosecuted by disciplinary counsel with the assistance of professional investigators and a support staff of paralegals and administrative assistants. In 2023, ODC received 1,759 grievances.

NOTE
1. Conflicts Review Officers perform this review when required by ELC 2.7. In some cases not subject to ELC 2.7, initial review is assigned to independent Special Disciplinary Counsel under ELC 2.8(b).

Practice Areas of Grievances

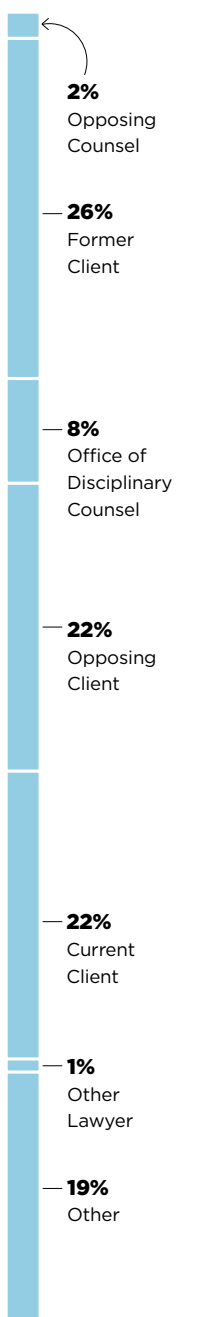
Top 15 (by highest percentage)



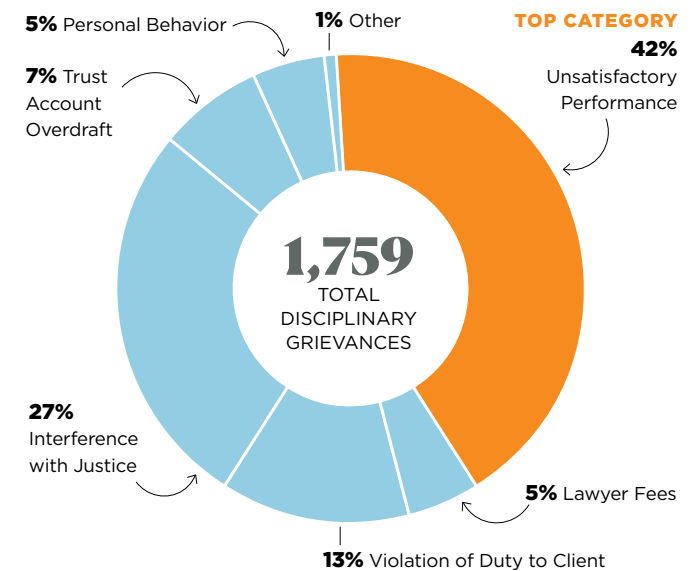
NOTE: **"Unknown" captures those grievances where there was too little information to determine a practice area.***"Other" reflects those practice areas that arise infrequently.



Sources of Grievances Filed



Nature of Grievances



NOTE: "Interference with Justice" may include improper contacts with represented parties or judicial officers and misrepresentations to the court. "Personal Behavior" may include criminal law violations and other conduct not necessarily related to the practice of law.

Grievance Filings in Detail

In 2023, the majority of grievances against Washington lawyers originated from current and former clients and opposing clients. Discipline files are opened in the name of the Office of Disciplinary Counsel when potential ethical misconduct comes to the attention of disciplinary counsel by means other than the submission of a grievance (e.g., news articles, notices of criminal conviction, trust account overdrafts, etc.) or through confidential sources. "Other" may include grievances filed by family members, neighbors, non-client members of the public, or other individuals.

BY THE NUMBERS PART I



