A scenic view of the Arkansas landscape, featuring rolling green hills, dense forests, and a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there are large, light-colored rocks and some green foliage. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular background in the center of the image.

ARKANSAS JUDGES AND
LAWYERS ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM
2023
ANNUAL
REPORT

JLAP Committee

Colin Jorgensen, Chair

Brandi Collins, Vice Chair

Betty Carpenter, Secretary

Bill Arnold

Catherine Corless

Dean Cynthia Nance

Dr. Laverne Bell-Tolliver

Hyginus Ukadike

Theresa Beiner

JLAP Staff

Jennifer Donaldson, LCSW, Executive Director

Candace McCown, LMSW, Deputy Director

Gwen Wright-Smith, Administrative Assistant

A note from the JLAP Executive Director...

Our 2023 annual report reflects the tremendous efforts of the JLAP staff, Committee, Foundation Board, and Volunteers throughout the year. With gratitude and appreciation, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your dedication and commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of the Arkansas legal community. You all are the heart of our program, pumping life to those who need it!

As we continue to uphold our mission of protection, service, and education, I and the JLAP Staff would like to thank the many supporters of JLAP. Your dedication to sustaining our purpose allows Arkansas to have a thriving Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program. I am grateful for your support.

As always, thank you to the Arkansas Supreme Court for the creation and maintenance of this amazing mental health service and resource within the legal community that also protects the public at large. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve with you all. I look forward to another great year!

– Jennifer Donaldson, LCSW, AR JLAP Executive Director

A letter from the JLAP Committee Chair

In 2023, JLAP continued to meet its core mission of providing clinical services to Arkansas judges, attorneys, and law students. JLAP received 319 contacts and served 149 clients in 2023, after receiving 331 contacts and serving 171 clients in 2022. JLAP continues to experience high demand for mental-health services, consistent with the continuous demand that has been predicted and observed across all populations.

In JLAP's 2022 annual report, I noted a sharp increase in the number of law students served by JLAP—45.6% of JLAP clients in 2022 were law students. This number reduced significantly in 2023, when 36.2% of JLAP clients were law students. 44.9% of JLAP clients in 2023 were attorneys, with attorneys resuming their usual position as the top JLAP client. 11.4% of JLAP's 2023 clients were family members, 5.4% were judges, and 2% were bar applicants.

A second—and very positive—development that I noted in JLAP's 2022 report was the fact that JLAP served eight judges as clients in 2022. This was a record number of judges receiving JLAP assistance, by a substantial margin. We are pleased to report that JLAP again served eight judges in 2023. This is excellent news, as it further indicates a cultural shift regarding stigma within the judiciary. JLAP is grateful to have assisted eight judges in each of the last two years, and we hope to continue to serve more judges in the future.

Of the 149 clients served by JLAP in 2023: 64 received services and were discharged by the end of 2023, 34 were referred to receive services from mental-health providers, 42 remained active JLAP clients at the end of 2023, and nine became inactive before receiving their first outpatient service after intake. The most common presenting problem for JLAP clients in 2023 was mental health (53.7%), followed by addiction issues (13.4%), trauma (12.1%), family/relational issues (6.7%), educational stressors (4%), and occupational issues, extreme stressors, and grief/loss (3.3% each).

Due to a spending freeze through most of 2023, JLAP was unable to provide certain services beyond the core mission of ensuring clinical services for Arkansas judges, attorneys, and law students. The attorney well-being program for the Arkansas bench and bar, approved by the Supreme Court in 2021, was largely paused throughout 2023, but JLAP continued to offer well-being CLE programming, and JLAP continued to promote attorney well-being in ways that did not involve the expenditure of funds. JLAP staff, the JLAP Committee, and JLAP advocates and volunteers are hopeful that the attorney well-being program can resume in the future as recommended by the Arkansas Supreme Court Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being.

In 2023, the JLAP Foundation experienced some turbulence that negatively impacted Foundation fundraising for part of the year, but the Foundation was nevertheless able to host the JLAP Advocates Dinner in late 2023, and as usual, the dinner was a great success. The Foundation raised over \$30,000 after deducting dinner expenses, and honored the late Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Robin Wynne, whose family graciously attended and accepted Justice Wynne's award. The Foundation also honored Stark Ligon, who worked for the Supreme Court for over two decades, serving in multiple capacities, and who has been a JLAP advocate for years.

We are grateful to several current Justices of the Arkansas Supreme Court who attended the Advocates Dinner in 2023. The JLAP Committee thanks the Arkansas Supreme Court for the Court's enduring support of JLAP, and for entrusting JLAP with its important missions concerning the mental health and well-being of judges, lawyers, and law students in Arkansas.

– Colin Jorgensen, JLAP Committee Chair

A letter from the AR JLAP Foundation Chair

The JLAP Foundation (foundation) is pleased to report that we had a successful year meeting the foundation's primary purpose to raise money to supplement State of Arkansas monies appropriated for the operation of the Arkansas Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (ARJLAP). The foundation's net balance as of January 19, 2024, is sixty-two thousand three hundred seventy-five dollars and 51/100 (\$62,375.51).

Donations to the foundation for the 2023 year were achieved from individual monthly contributions, lump sum donations, and a fundraising dinner in November 2023.

The foundation faced challenges at the beginning of 2023, but the board summoned its resilience, comradery, and collaboration to remain intact and to move forward with its mission to strengthen the legal profession by helping struggling attorneys.

The fundraising dinner was reimagined to employ an event planner and free the foundation to concentrate on fundraising. An event planner was hired in July and the next month the board engaged a professional fundraiser to train the board and provide useful tools for cultivating leads and approaching sponsors. As we embarked on fundraising, each member of the board worked to not only to secure sponsors, but to support others board members' efforts in their outreach efforts by sometimes doubling and tripling contacts with a potential sponsor to gain the sponsorship. The board also worked diligently to draw support and gain sponsorships from new law firms and treatment centers. In all these efforts, ARJLAP was instrumental in providing information to the foundation.

The fundraising dinner grossed close to sixty thousand dollars (\$59,596.55) and cleared more than half of that (\$35,707.23). Comparing the prior year's fundraising dinner financials, the gross amount remained the same, with a lower net due to the foundation's decision to hire an event planner, streamline the silent auction to capture high dollar bids only, incorporate a separate retail event to raise revenue (J. McLaughlins), and change the dinner venue.

2022 dinner	2023 dinner
Gross: \$60,271.18 (\$9K silent auction)	Gross: \$59,596.55 (\$4.5K silent auction- 1 item)
Expenses: \$16,392	Expenses: \$23,889.32 (\$5K event planner)
Net: \$43,879.18	Net \$35,707.23

Reviews of the dinner have been positive. From the board's perspective, removing logistical demands of dinner planning and setup from the board to an event planner was a great boost to foundation morale. It is important to note that even with the event planner, ARJLAP was integral in providing dinner planning support and design. The foundation will build upon the successes of the 2023 dinner and continue to concentrate on fundraising efforts.

As I worked during the year to strengthen the board, I utilized the officers as an executive team to define goals and efforts that are brought before the foundation. Building board member unity remains a priority. The foundation meets every other month to work on the various committee or individual assignments until May, when the focus will once again be on a fundraiser.

Many thanks to the members of the committee who provided support during the year. Let me know if there is any additional information you would like regarding the foundation's activities.

— *Laura Gilson, JLAP Foundation Board Chair*

2023 Year in Review

January

JLAP Foundation Meeting

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

Judicial Roundtable

February

Washington County Bar CLE

The National Council of Lawyer Disciplinary Boards Annual Conference - New Orleans, LA – CLE

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

Judicial Roundtable

March

Natural Resources Conference CLE in Hot Springs

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

April

AR Specialty Courts Conference: Compassion Fatigue CLE

Disaster Response CLE

Burnout and Compassion Fatigue CLE at DHS

JLAP Committee Meeting

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

Judicial Roundtable

May

LAP Directors Meeting in Minneapolis, MN

Pulaski County Bar Association - Annual Meeting Mocktail Bar

Offered 5 virtual CLE's on ethics and wellbeing in law

JLAP Foundation Meeting

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

Judicial Roundtable

June

Wellbeing Room Arkansas Bar Conference in Hot Springs

JLAP Committee and Foundation Meetings

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

July

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

August

U of A Law School Orientation

JLAP Foundation Meeting

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

Judicial Roundtable

September

JLAP Committee and Foundation Meetings

Treatment facility visit

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

Judicial Grief Group

October

Bowen School of Law Health Fair

Fall Judicial College

U of A Law School Wellness Week Naloxone training

U of A Law School Wellness Week on campus support group

Treatment facility visit

JLAP Foundation Meeting

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

November

JourneyWell room at Stress Less Fest at Bowen School of Law

JourneyWell room at U of A

The Walking Dead Part 2 CLE at DHS

JLAP Foundation Meeting

Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

JLAP Foundation Annual Advocates Dinner in Little Rock

December

Registration for 2024 Judicial Wellness Group

JLAP Committee Meeting

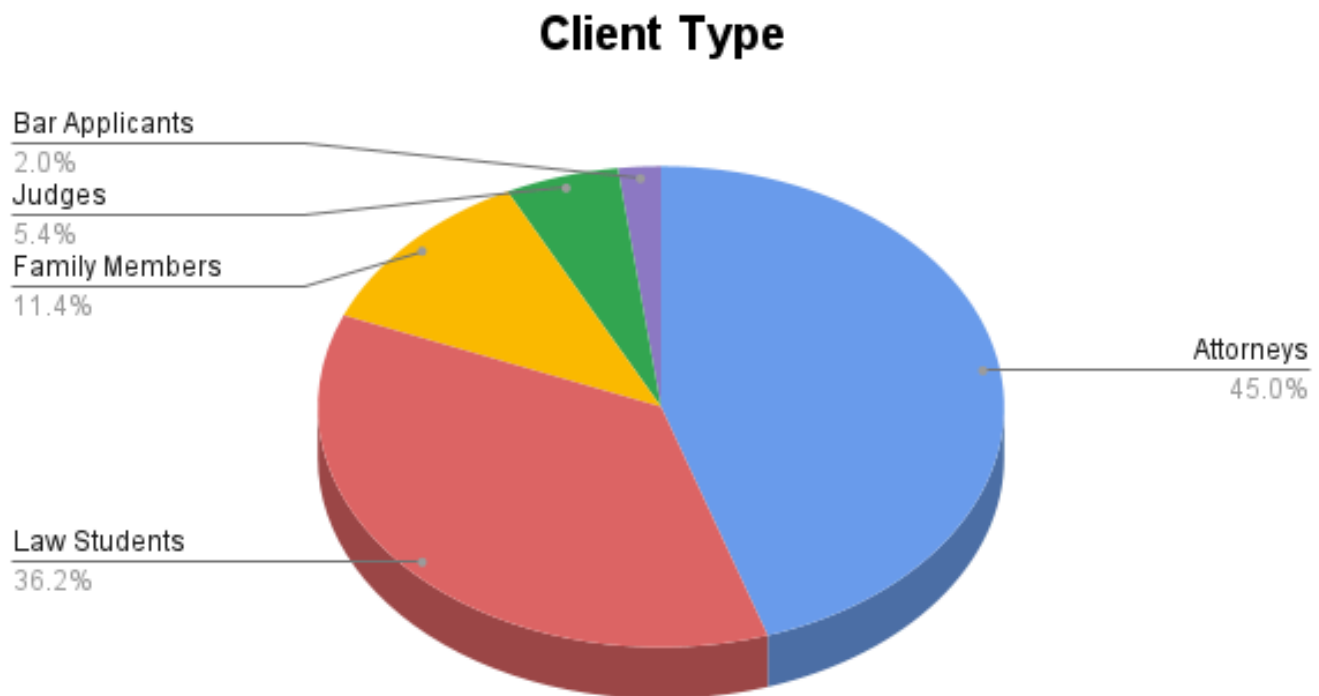
Lawyers Helping Lawyers online weekly support groups

2023 Data

In 2023, JLAP received 319 contacts for assistance. From those contacts, JLAP staff engaged with 149 individuals as clients and assisted 285 individuals via referral, information call, or resource connection, a substantial increase in resource requests to our office compared to the 160 contact requests in 2022.

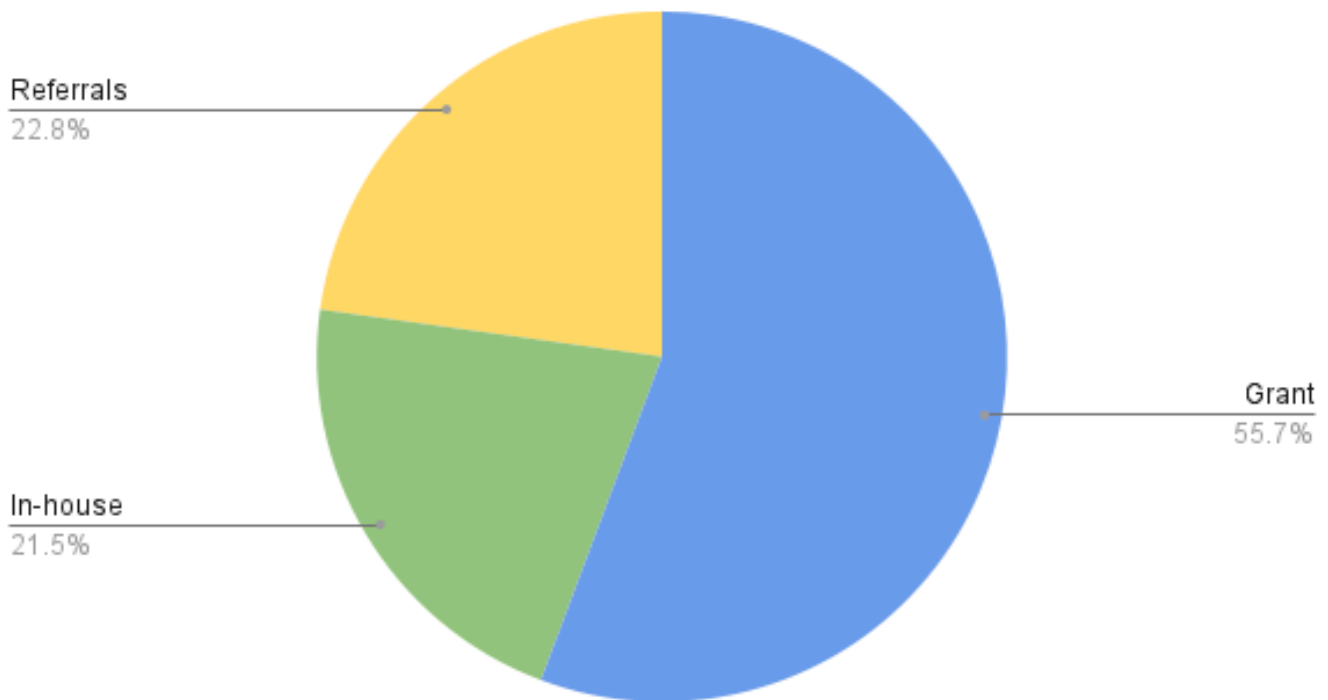
At the end of 2023, 49 clients remained active with JLAP.

Of the 149 clients who received JLAP assistance in 2023, the breakdown is as follows: Attorneys (67); Bar Applicants (3); Bowen Students (31); U of A Students (23); Family Members (17); Judges (8).

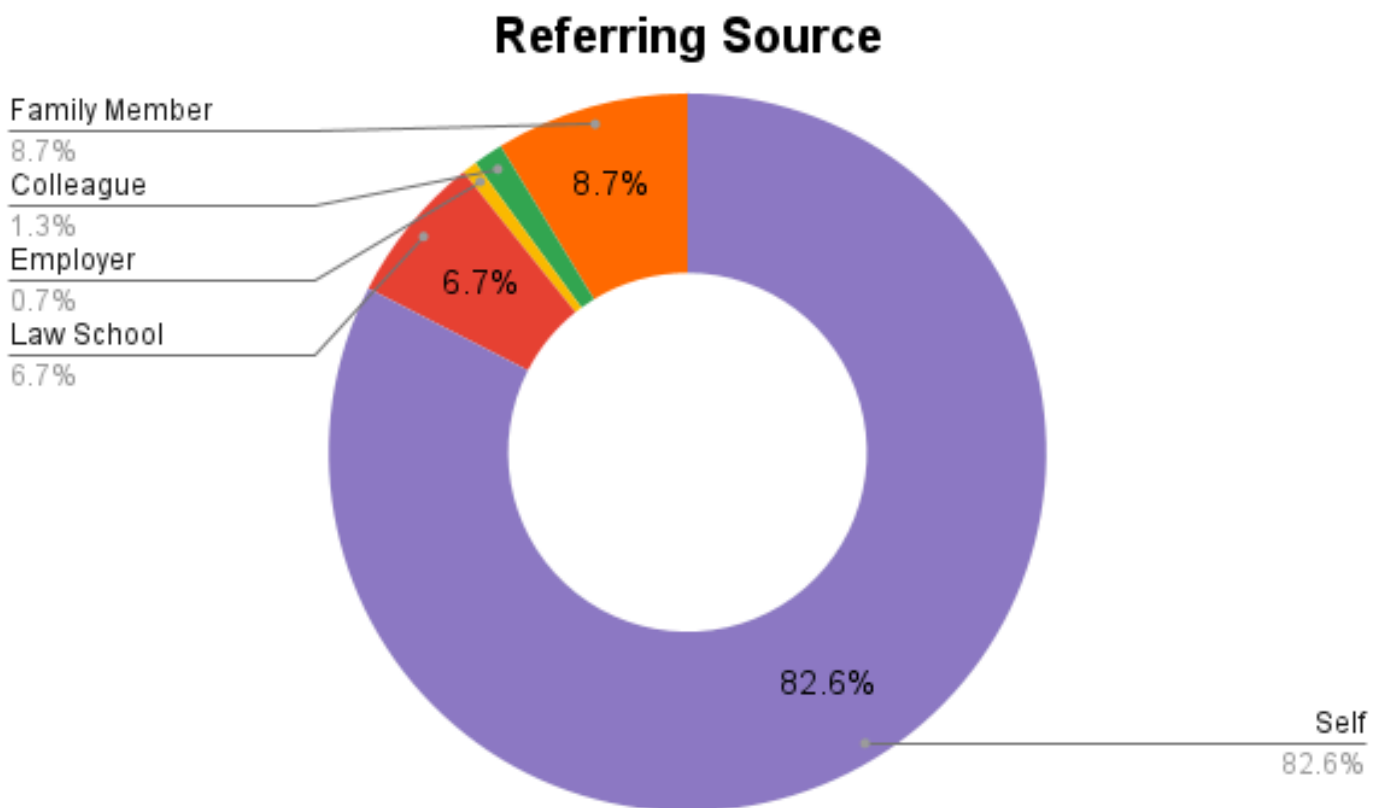


Of the 149 clients served, JLAP provided 83 clients with grants this year to help with their various mental health needs, at various levels of care. JLAP staff also provided in house outpatient therapy services to 32 clients and provided an out of network referral for 34 individuals. At the end of 2023, JLAP contracted with over 48 mental health providers throughout the state to provide mental health services to our legal community.

JLAP Client Services

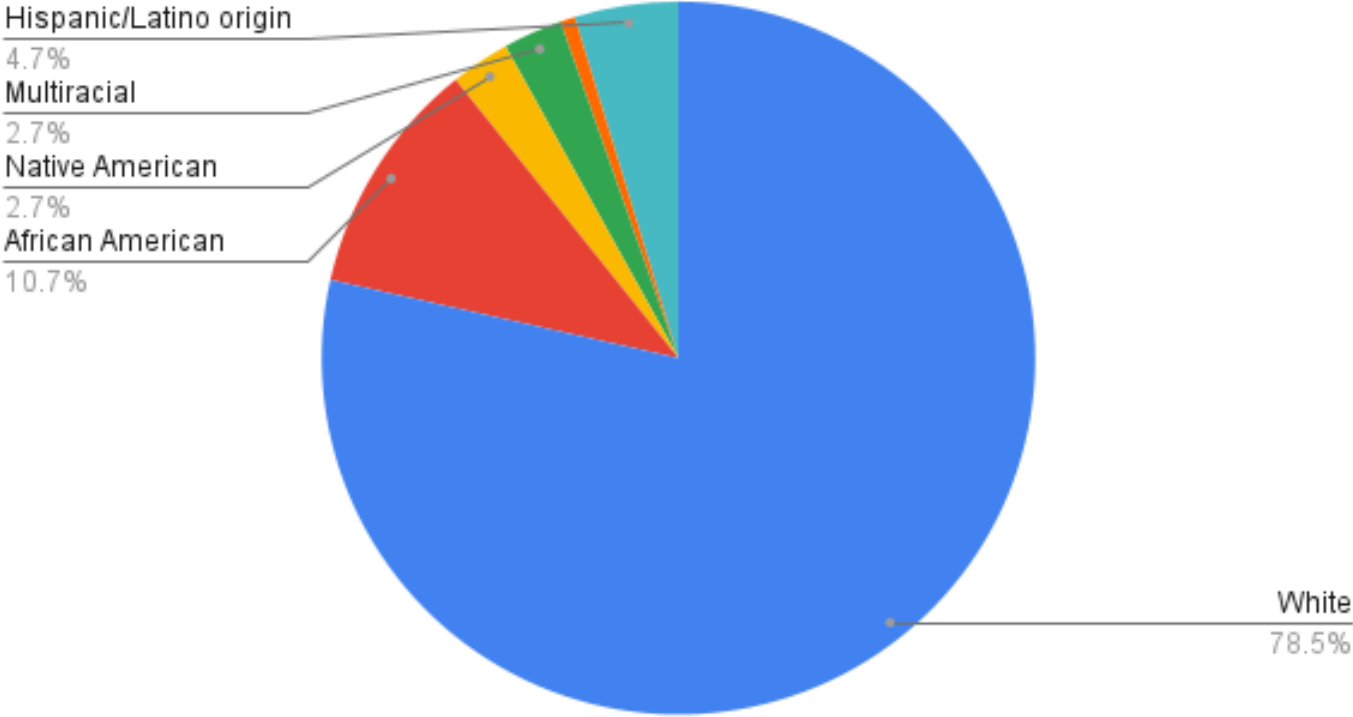


This year JLAP received more contacts via our confidential portal on the JLAP website, www.arjlap.org. JLAP used community outreach efforts to increase awareness of services through CLEs, social media campaigns, and word of mouth by volunteers and former clients. The primary referral method to JLAP continues to be self referral with other referral sources including employers, law schools, and colleagues.

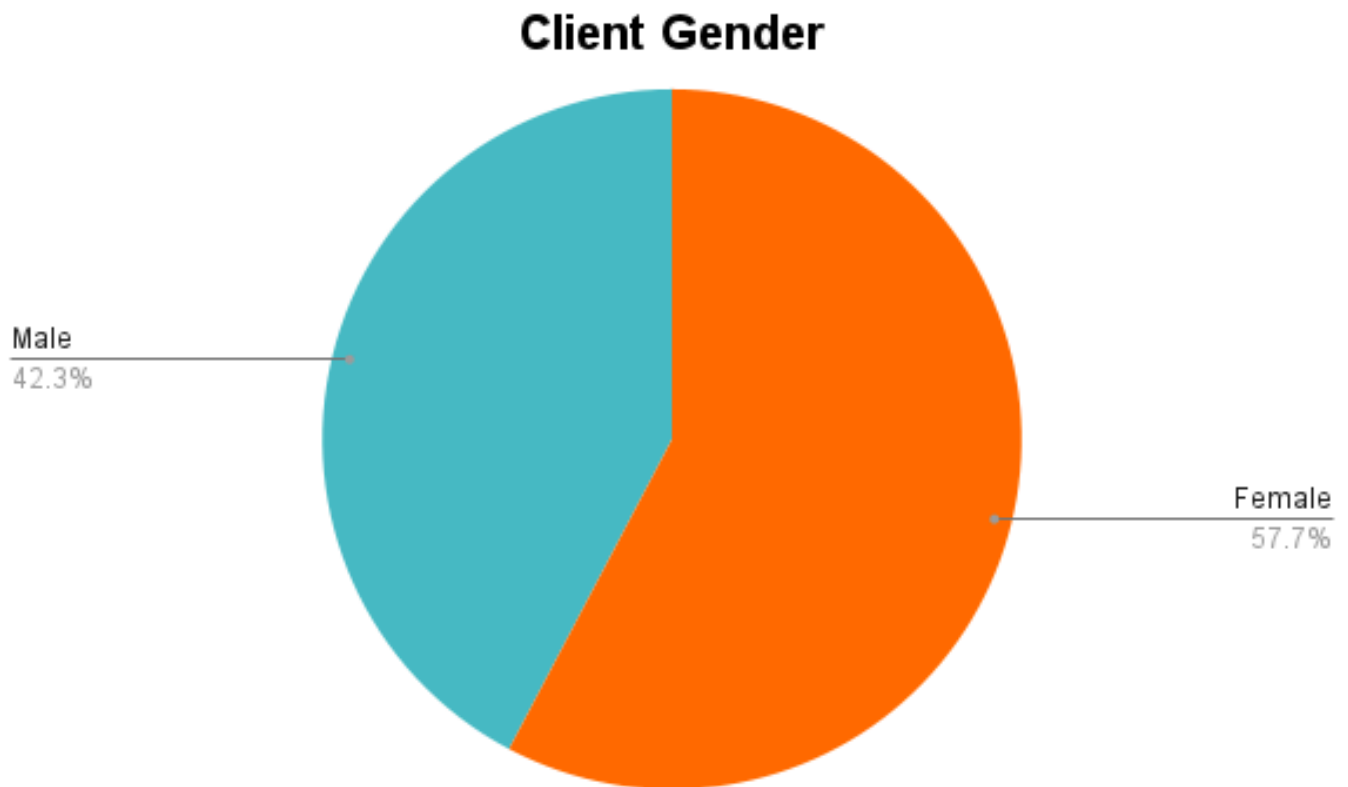


In 2023, clients receiving services continued to increase and diversify, with our Caucasian population decreasing from 83.6% last year to 78.5% in 2023. For 2023, JLAP clients self-identified as 10.7% African American, 4.7% Hispanic/Latino, and 5.4% Asian American, Native American, & Bi/Multiracial client base. The majority of clients served remains overwhelmingly Caucasian (78.5%). JLAP recognizes the need to continue to increase community outreach to marginalized communities in efforts to raise awareness of JLAP services and resources.

Client Race/Ethnicity

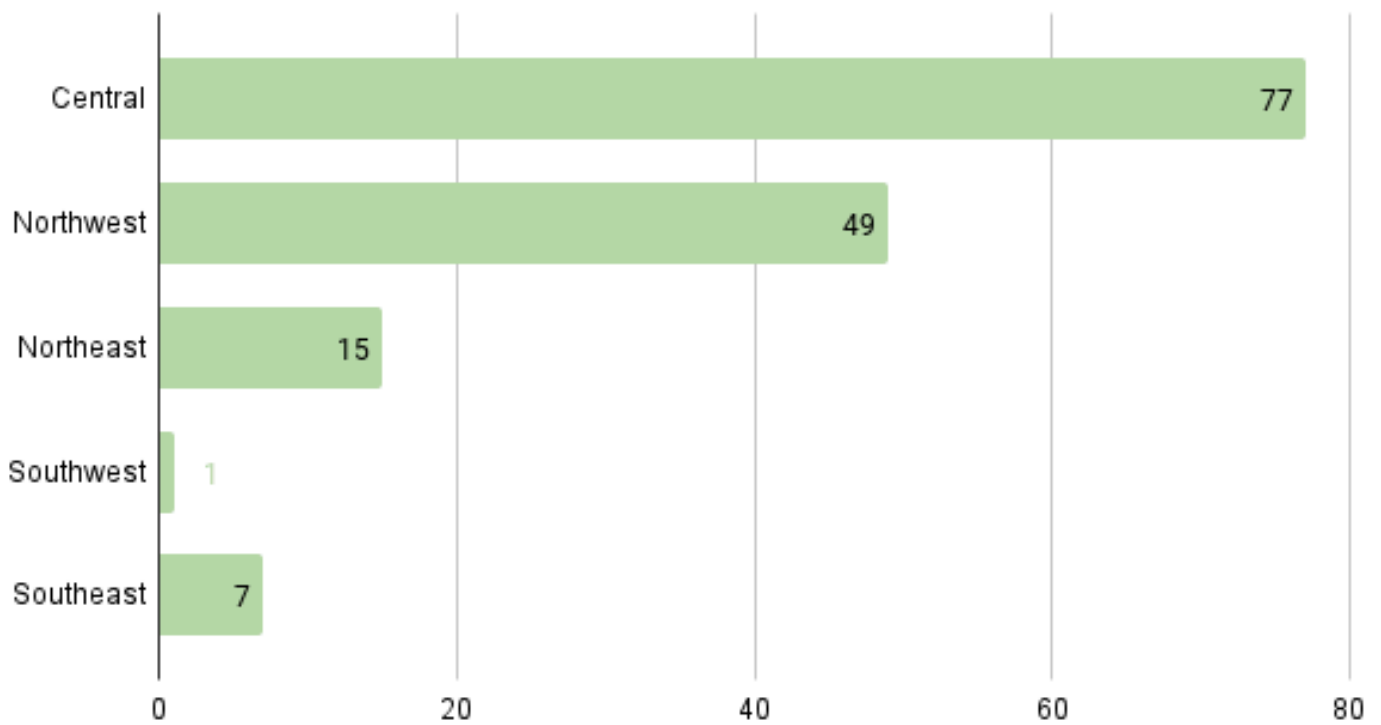


JLAP served more female clients than male clients in 2023 (Male 42.3%; Female 57.7%). JLAP recognizes a need for more gender inclusivity in community outreach efforts.



JLAP offers services statewide, yet a large concentration of services are provided in Central and Northwest Arkansas. With increased community outreach and telehealth continuing to be a preferred source for many services, JLAP hopes to see an increase in service awareness and utilization in all areas of the state.

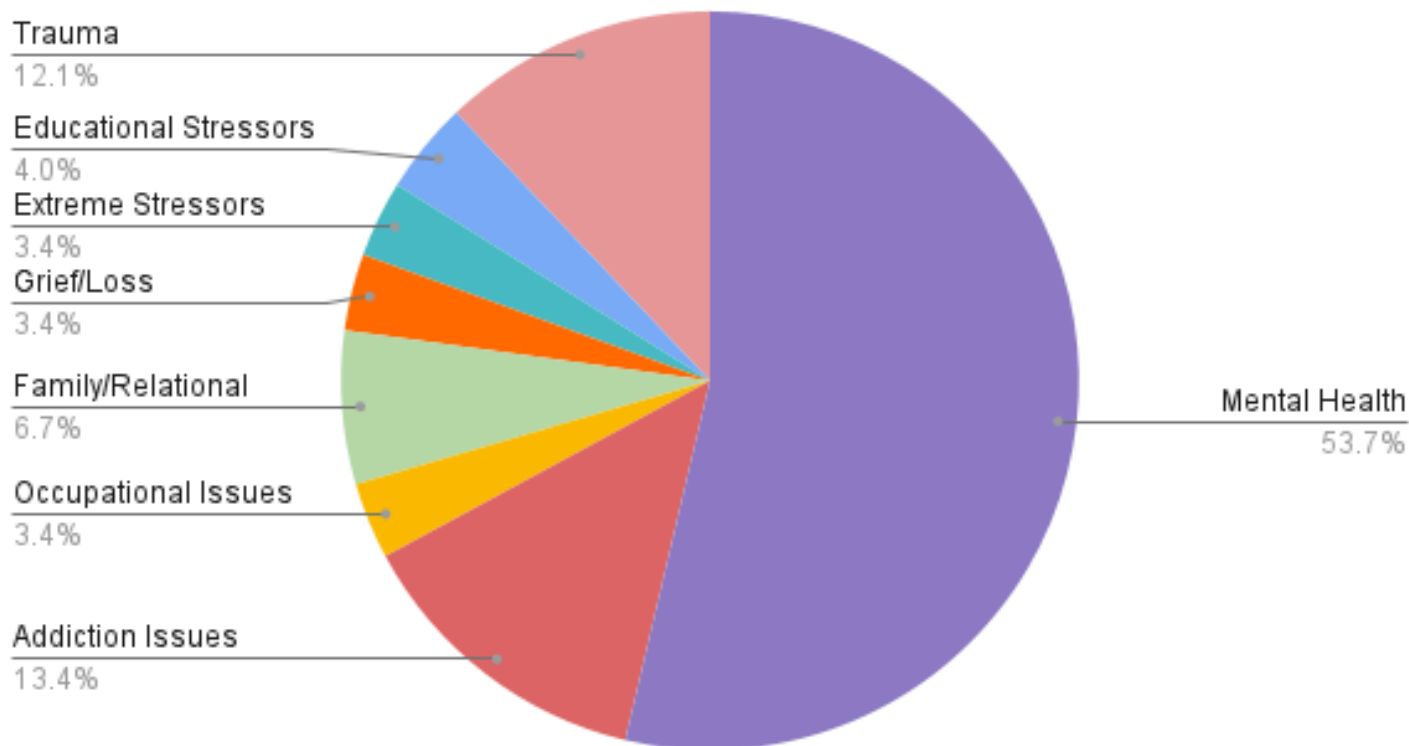
Client Location in State



This table represents the primary, self reported issue of the individual requesting JLAP services. Mental Health Concerns decreased from 64.3% of client issues in 2022 in comparison to 53.7% in 2023. Self reported anxiety, mood instability, vicarious and personal trauma, aging related issues, and neurodiversity inquiries all contribute to this category.

Substance use/misuse continues to rank secondary to underlying mental health issues. In 2023 JLAP received a slight increase in substance abuse reporting from 10.5% of 2022 clients to 13.4% of 2023 clients. While noting this increase, JLAP also received several requests for crisis intervention as well as residential treatment placement assistance relating to substance and/or alcohol use, more so than in the year 2022. Due to the increased need/request for trauma services over the past two years, JLAP added “Trauma” as a presenting issue in 2023 and 12.1% of the clients through JLAP reported Trauma as the primary reason for seeking assistance with our office.

Presenting Problem



JLAP offers in-house monitoring for clients who have found themselves in difficult situations with their mental health and have experienced substance/alcohol misuse.

While monitoring clients can be voluntary (for additional accountability on their sobriety journey) or mandatory (through employers, Office of Professional Conduct [OPC], and Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission [JDDC]). In 2023, JLAP had 9 clients who were monitored within our office and 2 clients were considered Mandatory Monitoring Clients due to their employers.