



ANNUAL REPORT 2019



 ARKANSAS JUDGES & LAWYERS
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
jlap



JLAP

Colin Jorgensen, Chair
Bill Putman, Vice Chair
Betty Jackson Carpenter, Secretary
Bill Arnold
Dean Theresa Beiner
Hon. Melinda French
Dan Sullivan
Dr. LaVerne Bell-Tolliver
Jonathan Warren

JLAP FOUNDATION

Hon. Annabelle Imber-Tuck Interim Chair
Ben Brenner
Michael Bynum
Blake Byrd
Brandi Collins, Secretary
Sarah Cowan
Laura Gilson
Jerome Green
Lee Lowther
Alicia Walton-Middleton
Skip Mooney, Jr
Cristy Park
Susan Reasoner
K. Coleman Westbrook Jr.
Amanda Nixon White

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2019... what a year!! The Arkansas Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (AR JLAP) gained a new Administrative Assistant in June, a new Executive Director in July, and then added a new full-time Mental Health Therapist in August. A special thanks to Arkansas Supreme Court for the addition of the Mental Health Therapist position! Despite the many transitions in staff, JLAP continued to provide quality therapy services, provide support for both law schools, and engage in community outreach. JLAP ED and AD attended the annual CO-LAP conference in Austin, TX in late September. It was here, JLAP received wonderful news that the ASC approved the AR Well-being Task Force Report on lawyer well-being. Our annual JLAP Foundation Advocates' Dinner was held in October, where we honored Michael Moore and the Friday Firm for their dedication to mental health, recovery, and overall wellbeing of the bench and bar. The JLAP Foundation exceeded their fundraising goal needed for grant sponsored client services. Finally, in December 2019, JLAP moved to new, larger office space to accommodate the growing needs across the state. With growth, came change and with change, came challenges; however, JLAP Assistant Director, Laura Laser, was the glue that held us all together throughout 2019!

The JLAP Committee and Foundation Board of Directors played vital roles in the successes of 2019. Their commitment to advocacy for judges, attorneys, and law students provided necessary support for JLAP services and staff. Committee Members and Board Directors lead the JLAP volunteer efforts for peer support, mentoring, and resource connection. This was the basis for the emerging Advocates at Heart Network.

As Executive Director, joining JLAP for the second half of 2019, I am thankful to be a part of an organization that upholds the importance of mental health and overall well-being. The JLAP network is truly a family group who value each other and the legal profession highly. I am honored to have been selected to lead such an outstanding program. Thank you to the JLAP Committee for their recommendation and to the ASC for their selection of me as ED. The year 2019 proved to be a triumphant year for AR JLAP. Here's to making 2020 a year to remember.

Yours truly,

Jennifer Donaldson, ED

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The JLAP Committee thanks the Arkansas Supreme Court for the creation of JLAP in Arkansas in 1999, and for the Court's enduring support of JLAP and its important missions. We are very grateful for the Court's kind attention, assistance, and leadership through the years—especially in 2019, which was another banner year for JLAP.

The number of active JLAP clients has increased dramatically in recent years and continues to grow year-by-year, which is wonderful news because this means JLAP is helping more attorneys, law students, and immediate family members recover from mental health and substance use disorders. JLAP continues to be supported by the nonprofit JLAP Foundation, which contributes critical funding for grants to clients who cannot travel to the JLAP office or who need specialized services beyond those offered by JLAP clinicians. JLAP also continues to receive support from its volunteers, who provide services ranging from mentoring and monitoring JLAP clients, to assisting with event planning and operations, to community outreach and CLE presentations.

In April of 2019, former JLAP Executive Director Andre Lewis resigned to pursue a private opportunity. Andre suggested in his resignation letter and made clear in conversation with me that he struggled to lead JLAP as demand for JLAP services continued its rapid increase. The Court hired Jennifer Donaldson to replace Andre as Executive Director, and Jennifer started in July. Jennifer is an LCSW and has experience working as the director of a hospital IOP program, and operating her own private mental and behavioral practice. Jennifer has proven to be a great fit for this role, both clinical and administrative. We are glad to have her, and grateful to the Court for making an excellent choice to lead JLAP. Jennifer is also very excited (as am I) about the Arkansas Supreme Court Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, upon which she and I serve along with many other stakeholders.

Shortly after JLAP returned to full staff with Jennifer, Assistant Director Laura Laser, and Office Manager Amanda Canant (also a new member of JLAP staff hired in 2019), we received amazing news from the Court—the addition of a new full-time therapist position for JLAP. Jennifer and Laura wasted no time and our newest LSCW Therese Skinner joined the team. Therese is passionate about direct, outcome-based therapy and she is pursuing national certification in dialectical behavioral therapy, an evidence-based therapeutic approach that has shown strong success in treating trauma, substance abuse disorders, anxiety, depression, and personality disorders. Therese has taken on a full caseload of JLAP clients, which is great for those clients and has allowed Jennifer and Laura to focus some of their time on their administrative responsibilities.

At the end of 2019, JLAP moved into a new office location that the Court and Administrative Office of the Courts Director Marty Sullivan made available to JLAP in the AOC building at 2100 Riverfront Drive in Little Rock. This is additional great news for JLAP—the former office location was simply too small even before the addition of a new full-time therapist. Now JLAP has sufficient space for all three clinicians to provide clinical services, even simultaneously while protecting confidentiality, which was not possible before. The new space is also in a great location, and includes a large conference room—a meeting space that JLAP has needed for years.

The JLAP Committee is grateful to the Supreme Court and the AOC for taking care of JLAP. As we enter the new year, JLAP is providing more services to more clients, and better clinical services to those clients, than JLAP has ever been able to provide in the past. Thank you so much. The Committee also wishes to express its gratitude to JLAP Assistant Director Laura Laser, who served as interim JLAP Director for multiple months in 2019, quite literally running all aspects of the JLAP operation entirely by herself. We are grateful for Laura's grace and commitment to JLAP during a very challenging time.

As we look to the future, the JLAP Committee and JLAP staff are committed to continuing to provide more and better clinical services to clients than ever before. We are also working to develop several programs and services related to attorney well-being, as recommended by the Arkansas Supreme Court Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being. We hope to report exciting news about that important work in the next annual report.

Colin Jorgensen, Chair

LAW SCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW

Bowen:

SWS president, Connor Thompson, active officers

9/13 Kimberly Key-Bell/ lunch suicide prevention

10/10 Panel presentation with SWS and BLSA/lunch: Justice Imber Tuck, Mike Moore, a law professor

and 3L

10/28 Health Fair with BLSA/ giveaways, tabling, mental health screens

Stress Less Fest: JLAP/SWS Food Truck, activities

Tabling bi-monthly, SWS and/or JLAP

UA:

Tamla Lewis Associate Dean for Administration carried over from last year and JLAP helping fill in.

9/18 Let's Taco Bout Wellness: PhD from CAPS (wellness specialist) and JLAP table with info. 40

attended, law school bought lunch

October 7-10 Law Student Wellness Week. Games, yoga, chair massages, JLAP Panel presentation 10/8

of recent grads, Field day, 2L vs 3L

Video "To Hell and Back" Lawyer's Path to Recovery

Jamz for JLAP, Karaoke fundraiser at You Know Uno

Wednesdays: CAPS "Let's Talk" is going well, for all students but law students are utilizing the two hour

service

Bi-weekly yoga sessions

Law Student Wellness Society (LSWS) President: Maisie Manuel, active officers, Monthly newsletter with

a professor spotlight offering prizes via Instagram and twitter, Organized hike to Devil's Den this fall,

game night with professors in atrium at the school this fall, both semesters: Barrista Review (instead of

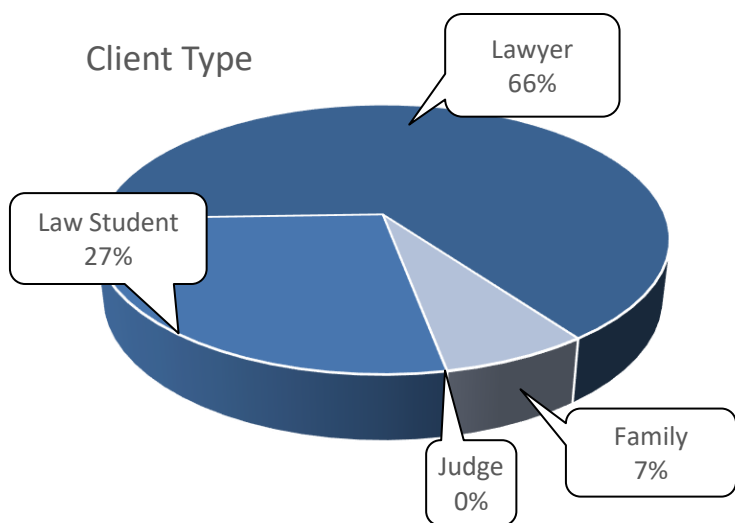
Bar Review) with coffee stations and nice coffee drinks pre-finals, dogs in courtyard pre-finals, Pairing

with Health Law Society to get a nutritionist from CAPS to present on healthy eating, quick tips/tricks,

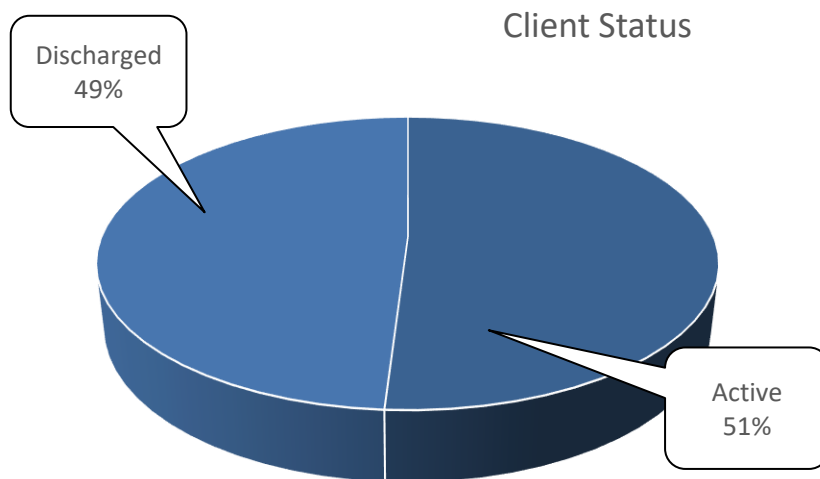
Trampoline park "After Dark" Spring

Tabling bi-monthly LSWS and/or JLAP

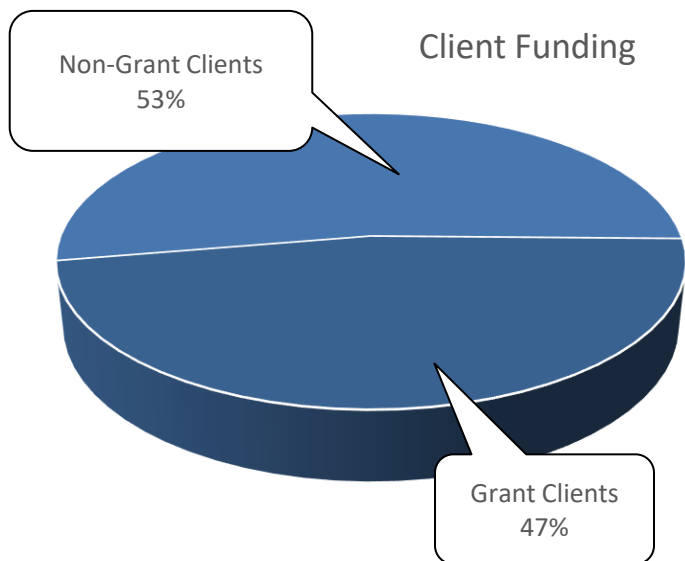
Client Information



In 2019, JLAP reached 68 new clients. JLAP staff engaged with 171 clients in 2019.

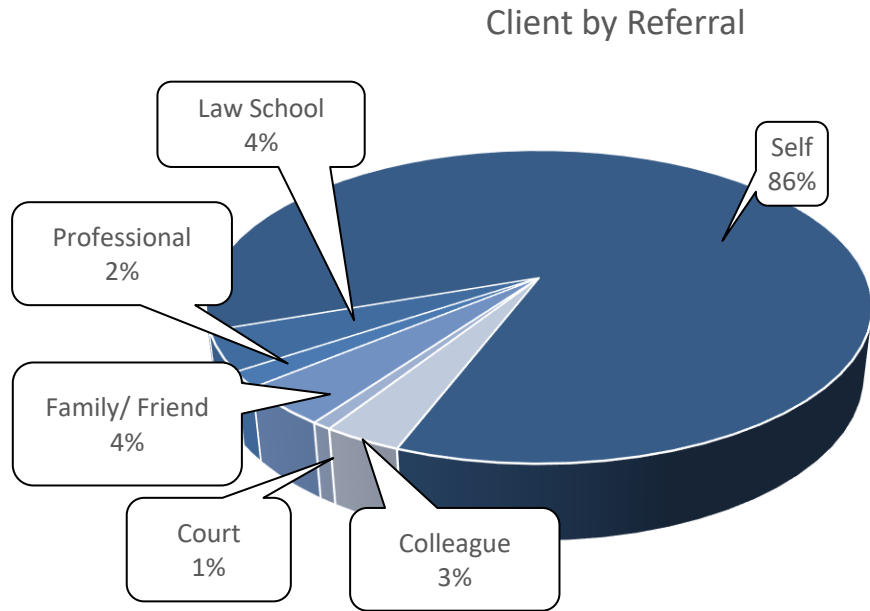


Of the 171 clients to come to JLAP in 2019, 51% remain active, 49% discontinued services.

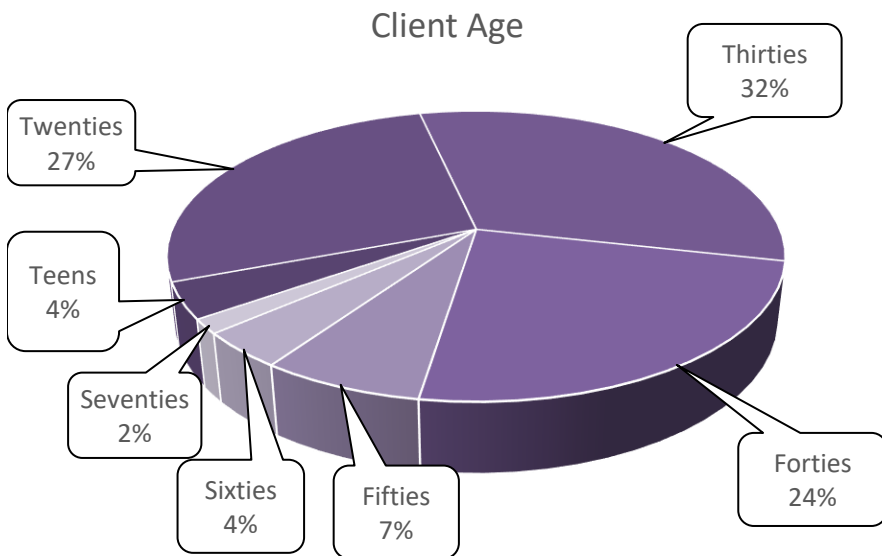


JLAP has provided 32 new clients this year with grants to help with their various needs including no-cost counseling for our rural clients. This is a decrease from 2018, largely due to the grant freeze implemented May-Sept 2019.

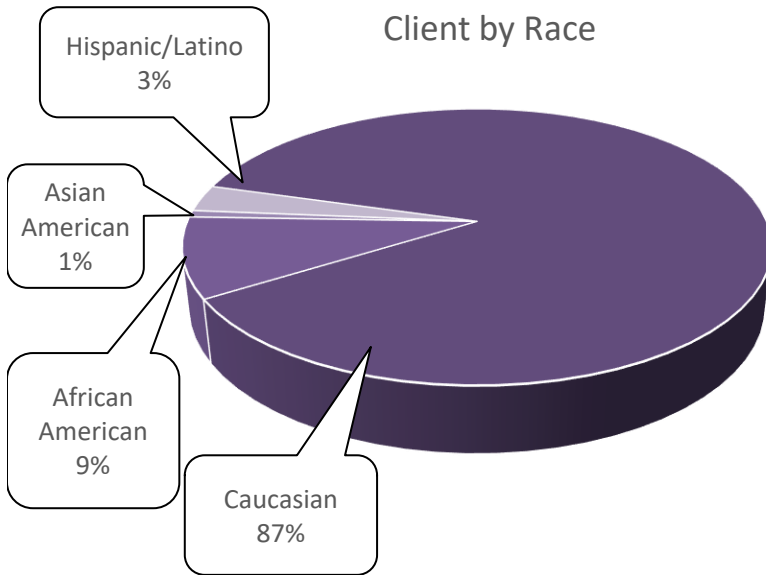
JLAP is finding that more clients are finding out about the program and its services through CLEs, presentations, and word of mouth. We are seeing a rise in self-referred clients who have “heard about JLAP”.



Client Demographics

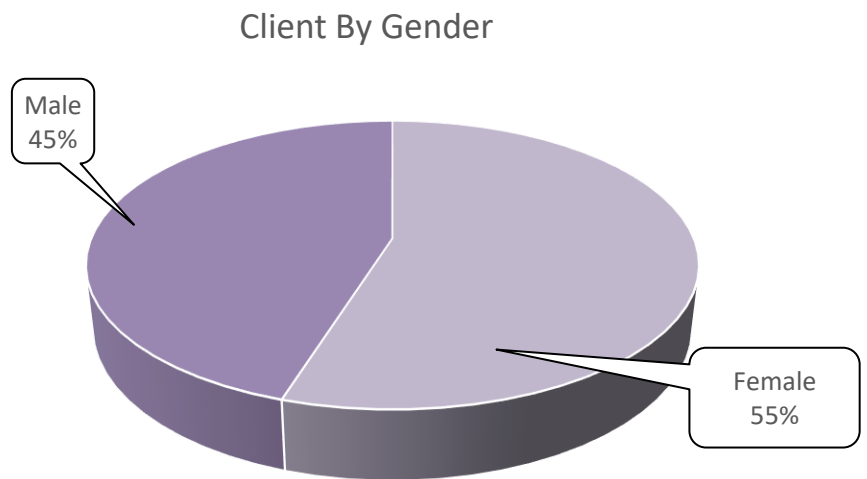


JLAP has been successful in reaching out to aid more lawyers, judges, families, and law students in the state of Arkansas. With our steady growth we still see a wide range of clients, from 17 years old to 72 years of age. Eighty-four percent of the people we help range from their early twenties to late forties.



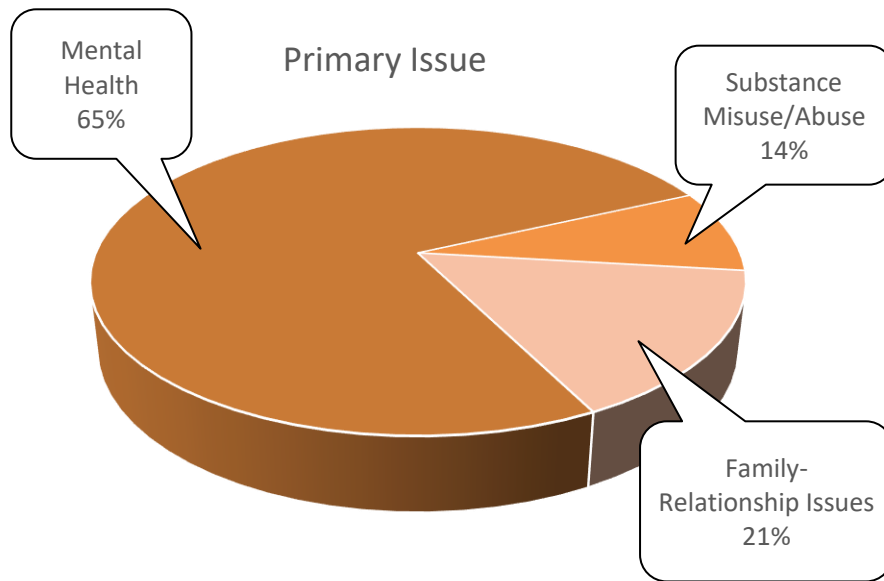
In 2019, we saw an increase in diversity with an 9% African American client base. JLAP has continued to reach out to minority communities by offering diverse options for services and referrals. We hope to continue this upward referral trend in more rural areas of the state.

Gender representation continues to trend the same as in past years. JLAP served more female clients than male clients in 2019.



Client Issues

Mental health concerns constitute 65% of client issues; this remains our most diversified category. Anxiety, overwhelming stress, and depression are the most common issues; however, vicarious trauma, grief/loss, and personality disorder continue to increase in new referrals. It is important to note that most law students report overwhelming stress associated with balancing school demands.



While alcohol abuse still represents most reports of substance abuse issues, opioid and prescription medication addiction are being reported more increasingly to JLAP staff. Substance abuse/misuse is most commonly secondary to underlying mental health issues; although it is the initial concern for 14% of 2019 clients.

The 21% represented in family and relationship issues, primarily consists of marital issues and parent/child relation conflicts. Issues of aging is also occasionally reported under this client concern.