

Arkansas Judges & Lawyers Assistance Program and Foundation 2021 Report

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Letter from the JLAP Committee Chair

As noted in last year's annual JLAP report, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything for JLAP, as it did for so many organizations—especially organizations and individuals who work in fields related to mental health and substance abuse.

In 2021, JLAP continued and refined many of the adjustments developed in 2020, such as providing direct clinical services to clients through telehealth and taking steps to stretch limited JLAP Foundation funding as far as possible for client grants. JLAP's clinicians and mental-health professionals (and scholars nationwide) continue to believe that the challenges and difficulties associated with the pandemic have produced and will produce greater demand for mental-health and substance-abuse services across all populations.

JLAP received 272 contacts and served 159 total clients in 2021, after serving 157 total clients in 2020. JLAP had 38 “active” clients at the end of 2020, and 82 active clients at the end of 2021. Other trends in JLAP clients have continued in recent years, with the emergence of some new geographic and sociodemographic trends. About a third of JLAP's clients continue to be law students, which is a wonderful indication of the benefit of expanding JLAP to serve law students, and the eradication of stigma in younger populations. As in 2020, slightly more than half of JLAP's clients in 2021 are female. The vast majority of JLAP clients are self-referrals, and the majority of JLAP's clients make contact for a mental health concern, while JLAP continues to serve some clients with substance use concerns and other concerns. JLAP clients continue to increase in the corners of the state, especially in northern Arkansas. And notably, JLAP clients sought assistance in 2021 for several issues distinct from mental health and substance use, including educational issues (12), family/relationship issues (12), occupational issues (11), extreme stress (5), and grief/loss (4).

The singular big news for JLAP in 2021 was the approval by the Arkansas Supreme Court of JLAP's proposal to launch an attorney well-being program for the Arkansas bench and bar, through JLAP. I wrote about this ad nauseum in this space a year ago, because JLAP staff and the Committee strongly believe that the ideal JLAP program would comprehensively address both acute clinical needs for clients and well-being for the entire population of Arkansas judges, attorneys, and law students. In 2021, the Court approved a well-being proposal with three core components: (1) a substantial boost in client referral grant funding, to support JLAP's core mission of providing clinical services to JLAP clients; (2) new well-being job duties for JLAP staff, to formalize the inclusion of well-being in JLAP's core mission; and (3) funding for well-being programs, training, events/conferences, development of peer support networks, and other well-being initiatives. JLAP staff, board members, and volunteers have been extremely excited to get to work on the well-being movement in Arkansas.

JLAP staff, JLAP Committee and Foundation members, and JLAP volunteers dedicated their energy to several programs and events in 2021. The first half of 2021 saw the continuation of the JLAP CLE program launched in 2020, with both free and inexpensive CLE programs offered across a wide range of topics, including many excellent well-being CLEs by local advocates/experts and guest lecturers/professionals. In September, JLAP hosted a training session for JLAP volunteers. Also in September, several members of JLAP staff and the Committee and Foundation collaborated to teach a session to LAP representatives from across the country at the annual CoLAP conference. In November, JLAP hosted an all-day mental health first aid training, leading to the certification of over a dozen JLAP volunteers and supporters. Also in November, the JLAP Foundation hosted the JLAP Advocates Dinner, and honored the Arkansas Supreme Court’s Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being and Chief Justice John Dan Kemp with awards for their efforts to promote attorney well-being in Arkansas. JLAP was grateful for the attendance and support of numerous leading attorneys, district judges and circuit judges, and three members of the Arkansas Supreme Court—Justice Courtney Hudson, Justice Robin Wynne, and Chief Justice Kemp.

As always, 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. But we offer special thanks to the Court as we reflect on 2021—we are exceedingly grateful for the Court’s leadership and support of well-being efforts in Arkansas. To show our appreciation, we will faithfully strive to better serve the judges, attorneys, and law students of Arkansas. Godspeed!

– Colin Jorgensen, JLAP Committee Chair

2021 Events

January 2021

- JLAP presents a CLE opportunity for retiring judges

February 2021

- JLAP packs and delivers care packages to over 250 judges throughout the state
- JLAP ED presents CLE to the Office of Chief Counsel

March 2021

- JLAP launches the “Spring Into Wellness” campaign with 20 pre approved CLEs.

April 2021

- JLAP Committee and Foundation Quarterly Meeting
- JLAP offers CLE opportunity for District Judges across the state
- JLAP Staff and volunteers attend National Institute of Wellbeing virtual training
- JLAP staff hosts outreach events for lawyers and judges in the NW part of the state
- JLAP hosts an outreach event for law students as the end of the school year approached

May 2021

- Well-Being Week in Law-1st week in May. JLAP presented an entire week of free mental health and wellbeing-based pre-approved CLEs to the Arkansas legal community.

June 2021

- JLAP coordinates COVID-safe NWA outreach events in order to maintain and grow our volunteers/contract providers
- JLAP Staff attend a workshop for equine therapy
- JLAP presents about mental health and wellbeing at the Spring Judicial College
- JLAP presents about mental health and wellbeing at the Arkansas Bar Association Annual Conference
- JLAP presents CLE for the Pulaski Co Bar Association

July 2021

- JLAP Staff and Volunteers attend the National Wellness Institute Conference virtually
- JLAP offers a Bar Prep Social at Community Bakery to all law students

August 2021

- JLAP coordinated COVID-safe NEA outreach events in order to maintain and grow our connections in rural areas.
- JLAP speaks to U of A law students at orientation to ensure students are aware of the services JLAP offers
- JLAP offers the first revised Volunteer Training to include well being measures
- JLAP Foundation hosts fundraising event at Bark Bar

September 2021

- JLAP Committee and Foundation Quarterly Meeting
- JLAP hosts a wellbeing event for Bowen students
- JLAP presents at 2021 ABA National Conference for Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP)
- JLAP RAP Session presented every Tuesday
- JLAP offers 2 virtual Self Compassion Workshops for law students featuring Peyton Woodruff, LPC

October 2021

- JLAP speaks to Bowen law students during the professionalism class section to ensure students are aware of the services JLAP offers
- JLAP offers 2 Mindfulness Self Compassion workshops with CLE featuring Dr. Catherine Crisp, LCSW, free and open to the entire AR legal community
- Annual LAP Director Conference in Atlanta, GA
- NWA wellBeing event for law students at the yacht club
- JLAP offers 2 virtual workshops on Emotional Intelligence featuring Ken Clark, free and open to the entire AR legal community
- JLAP provides care packages to over 100 judges at their fall conference.

November 2021

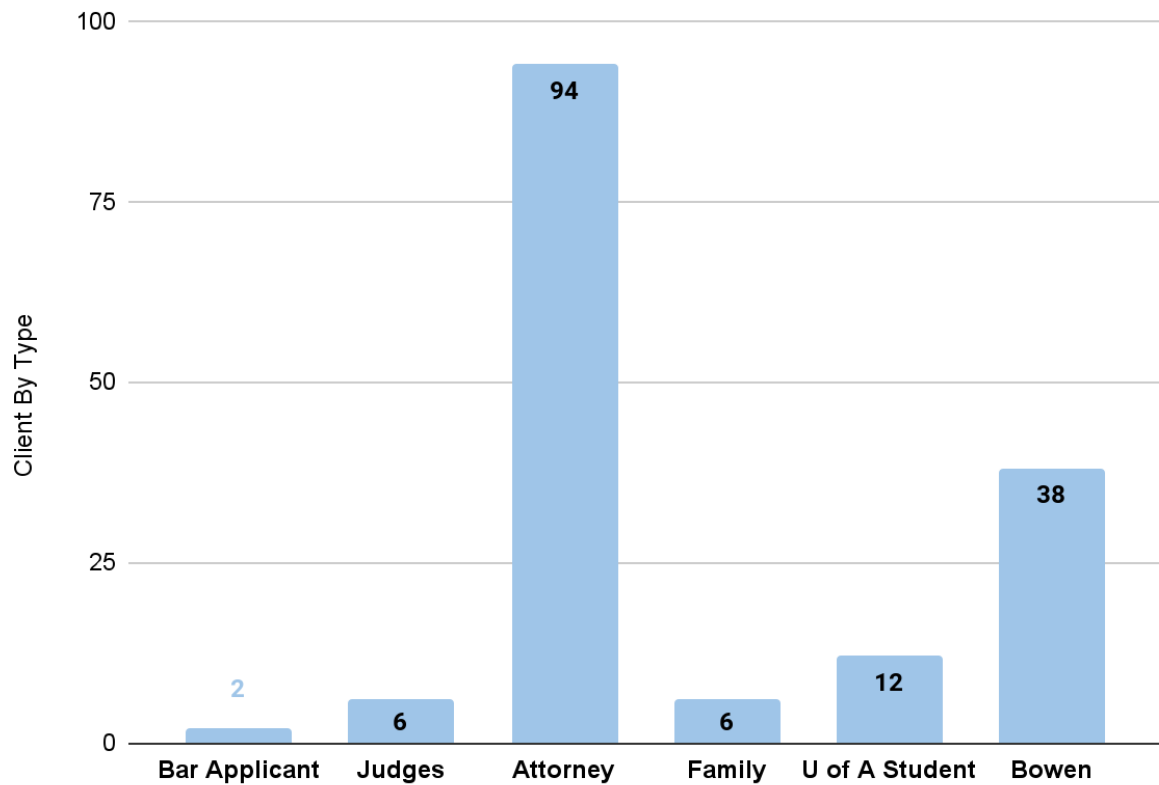
- JLAP Foundation Annual Advocates Dinner
- JLAP staff attends Annual Addiction Research Symposium
- JLAP provides 1st ever Mental Health First Aid Training to JLAP Volunteers
- JLAP Committee Vice Chair Bill Putman presents CLE at the MO LAP conference.
- JLAP collaborates with Bowen during Stress Less Fest for students before finals

December 2021

- JLAP Committee and Foundation Joint 4th Quarter Meetings
- JLAP organizes Judicial Roundtables for active judges, led by retired judges

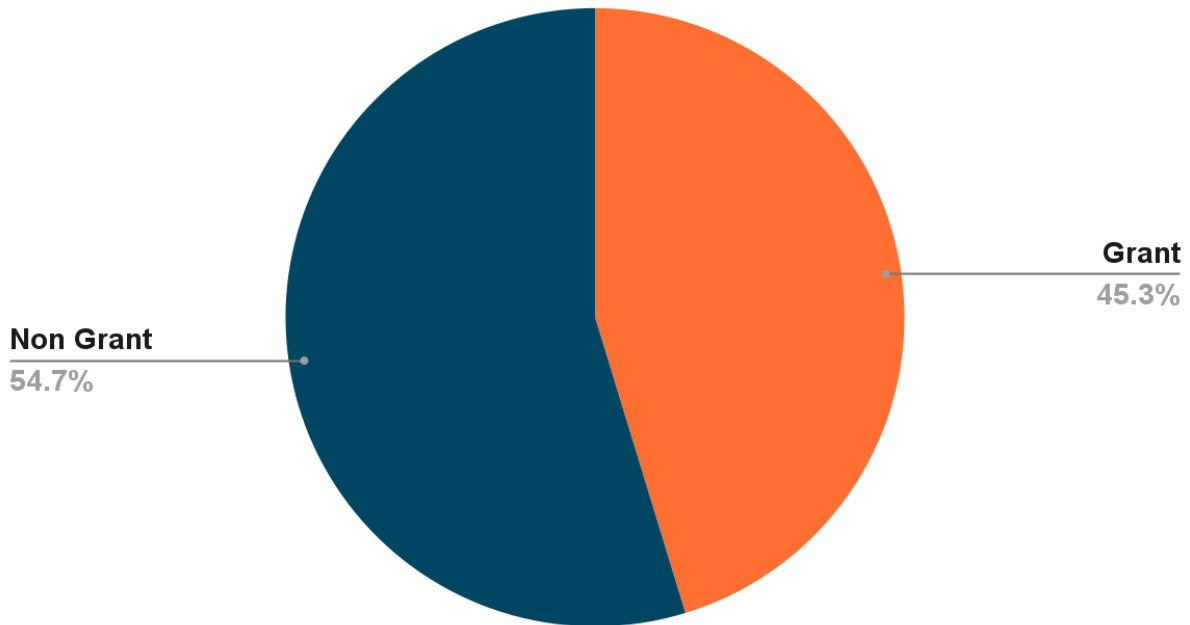
2021 Data

Client By Type



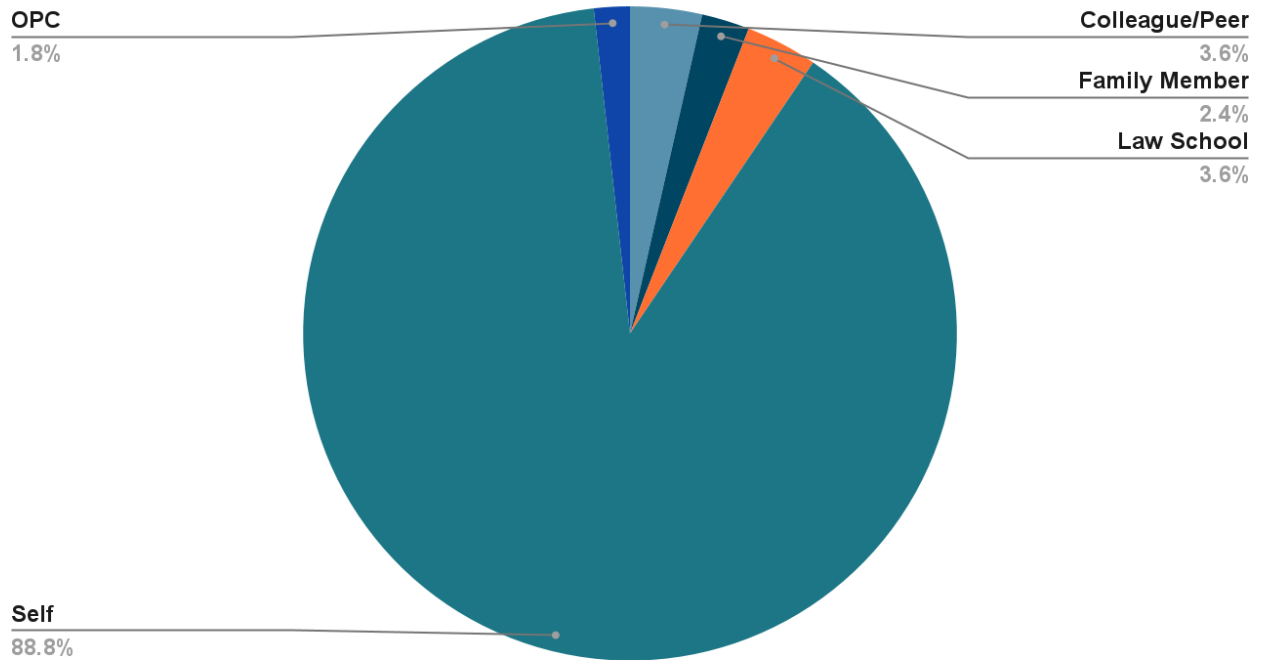
In 2021, JLAP received 272 contacts for assistance. JLAP staff engaged with 159 clients and assisted 113 individual contacts via referral, information call, or resource connection. At the end of 2021, 82 clients remained active with JLAP. Of the 159 clients who received JLAP assistance in 2021, 52% remained active, 48% were discharged from services.

Client Funding



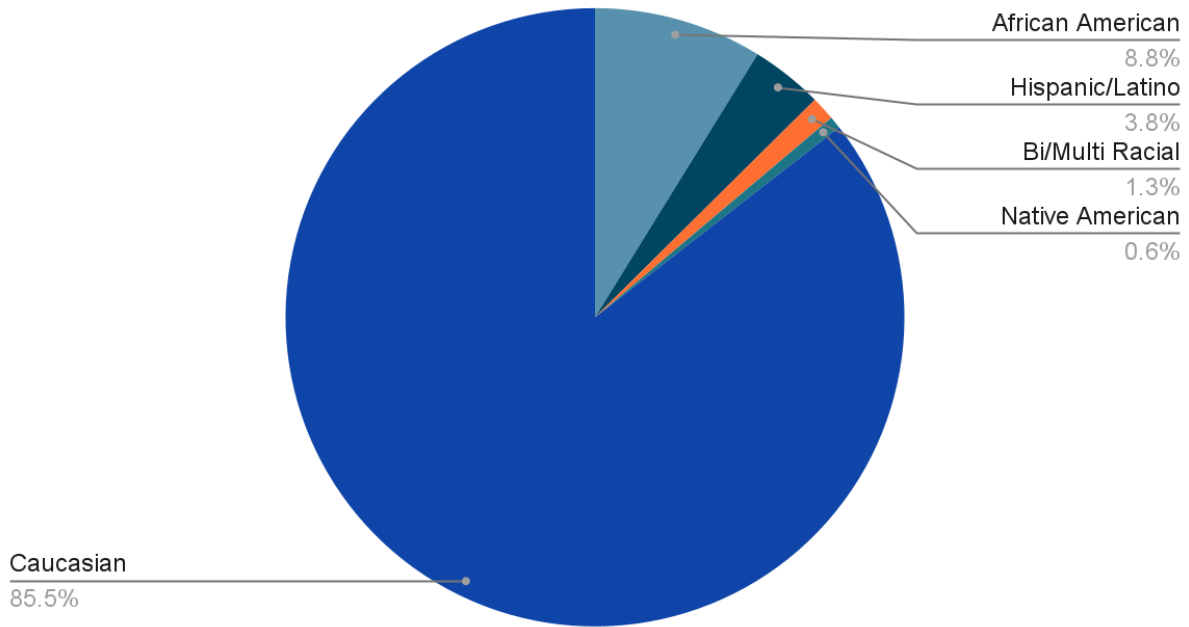
JLAP provided 72 new clients with grants this year to help with their various mental health needs, including little to no-cost inpatient treatment facilities. The JLAP Foundation dispersed over \$36,000 in financial distress grants for mental health services throughout the state. At the end of 2021, JLAP contracted with 48 mental health outpatient providers throughout the state.

Referral Source



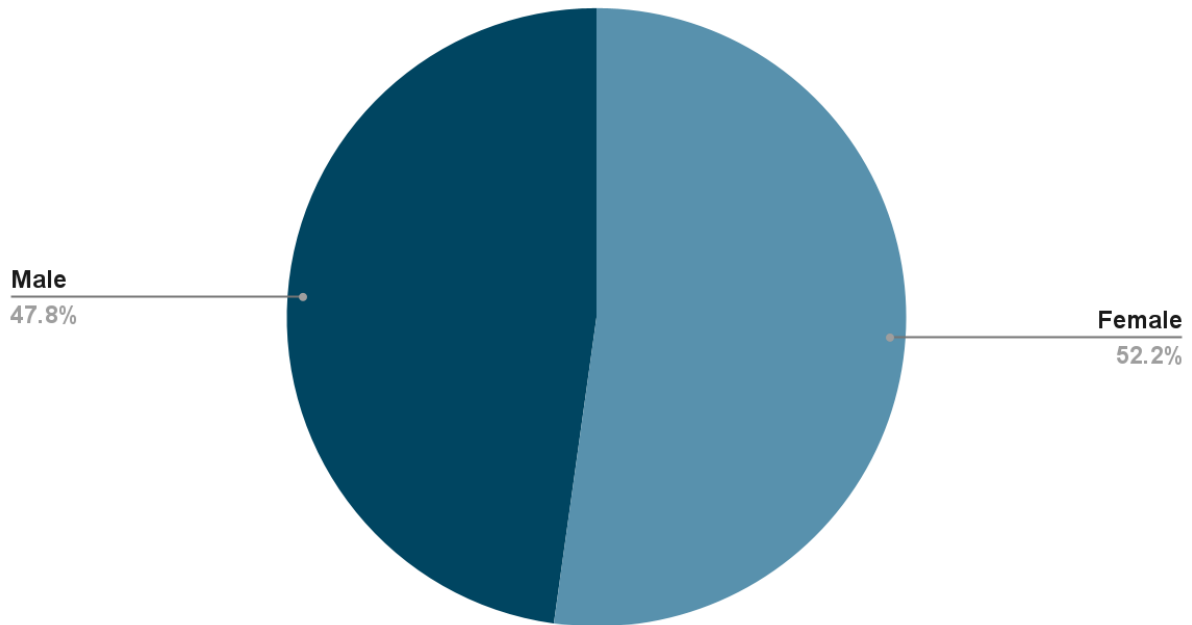
This year JLAP received more contacts via our confidential portal on the JLAP website, www.arjlap.org. JLAP used community outreach efforts to increase awareness of services through CLEs, social media campaigns, and word of mouth by volunteers and former clients. JLAP saw an increase in self referral clients in 2021 with other referral sources including employers, law schools, and discipline officers. However, these referrals are often due to what is considered involuntary circumstances.
(Self referral: 150 Other: 19)

Clients by Race/Ethnicity



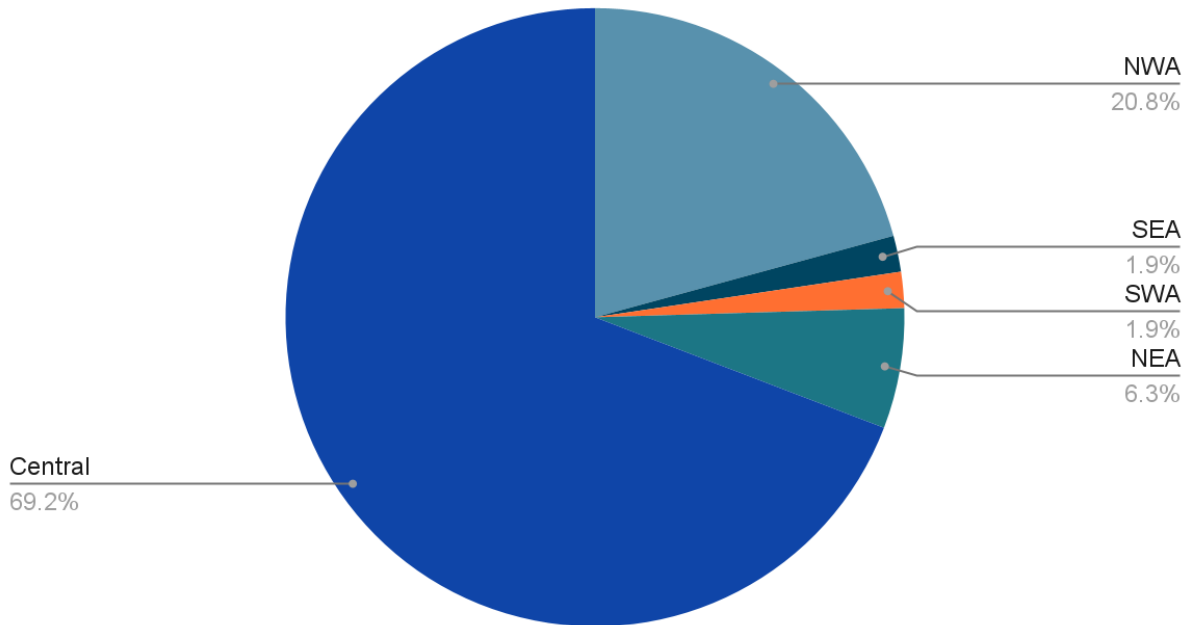
In 2021, clients served continued to increase and diversify with a 8.8% African American client base and a 4% Hispanic/Latino client base. JLAP has continued to reach out to marginalized communities by offering diverse options for services and expanding inclusivity in our provider network.

Client by Identified Sex



Sex representation continues to trend the same as in past years with a slight increase in the male population. JLAP served more female clients than male clients in 2021. (Male 47.8%; Female 52.2%)

Client Location



JLAP offers services throughout the state, with a large concentration of services provided in Central and Northwest Arkansas. Efforts to raise awareness in other parts of the state continued in 2021. With increased community outreach, JLAP saw an increase in clients from the Northeast Arkansas area. With telehealth continuing to be a preferred source of services, JLAP hopes to extend service reach.

Location of clients served:

Central AR: 110

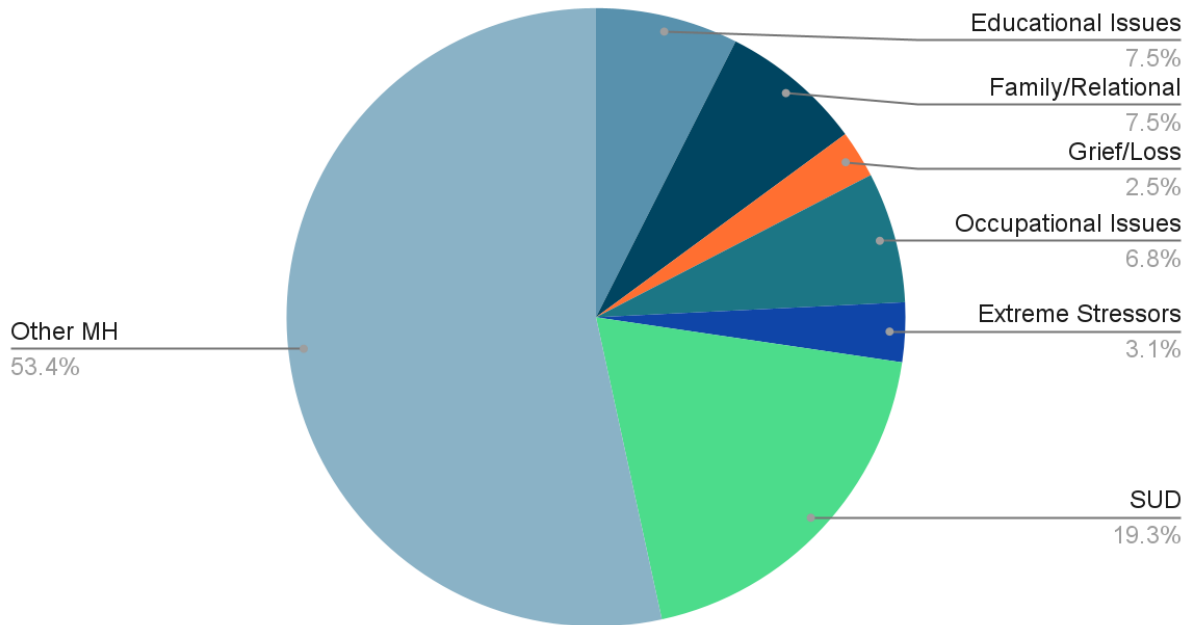
NWA: 33

NEA: 10

SWA: 3

SEA: 3

Presenting Reason of Contact



Mental health concerns constitute 53.4% of client issues; this remains our most diversified category. Anxiety, mood instability, vicarious and personal trauma, aging related issues, and neurodiversity contribute to this category. However, grief/loss, overwhelming stress, and family/relational issues continue to increase as the presenting reason for JLAP assistance.

It is important to note that most law students report overwhelming stress associated with balancing school demands, especially throughout the change to virtual learning vs on campus classes. Continuing into 2021, pandemic-related issues accompanied most presenting concerns within the mental health and substance use/misuse categories.

Substance use/misuse is most commonly secondary to underlying mental health issues; as of 2021 JLAP saw a significant increase in substance abuse from 16% of 2020 clients to 19.3% of 2021 clients.