

# Arkansas Judges & Lawyers Assistance Program and Foundation 2020 Report



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## Letter from the Committee Chair

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As noted in last year's annual JLAP report, 2019 was another banner year in a string of consecutive banner years for JLAP—with dramatic increases in active JLAP clients year-by-year, increased fundraising by the JLAP Foundation to fund grants for clients who cannot travel to the JLAP office or who need specialized services beyond those offered by JLAP clinicians, a growing network of JLAP volunteers providing an ever-increasing range of services, and the beginning of work to develop programs and services related to attorney well-being, as recommended by the Arkansas Supreme Court Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being. In 2020, the 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 the Spring of 2020, when lockdowns and social restrictions became the new norm, JLAP quickly transitioned to providing clinical services through videoconferencing technology—as did most mental-health clinicians nationwide. The transition was not easy for JLAP and JLAP's clients, but the transition was ultimately very successful. As of the writing of this letter, JLAP continues to provide direct clinical services to clients through telehealth. This is not ideal from a clinical perspective, but JLAP has made the best of it and expects that even when in-person clinical services can resume safely, JLAP will continue to offer telehealth services for clients who may prefer it. Telehealth is less time-consuming for both clients and staff, and has enabled JLAP to schedule more client sessions across a given time period. Some clients prefer the increased anonymity of not visiting the office, although JLAP has always taken measures to protect client confidentiality and ensure that no clients encounter other clients during their visits to the office.

After transitioning to telehealth, JLAP staff correctly anticipated additional challenges that have been realized across the remaining months of 2020 and into 2021. First and foremost, JLAP's clinicians recognized that the difficulties of life during a pandemic will produce a mental-health (and substance-abuse) crisis as populations adjust to (or endure) the many challenges of pandemic life. JLAP staff implemented several measures to prepare for an anticipated influx of new JLAP clients during the pandemic and beyond, including increased attorney and law student outreach through social media, CLE programming and other presentations to ensure that the JLAP population is aware of JLAP services, and internal measures to maximize clinician availability—shortening standard sessions, capping the number of sessions for certain categories of clients, and transitioning existing clients out of active status where appropriate.

The measures implemented to handle increased client services have skewed JLAP's annual statistics somewhat, with 38 “active” clients at the end of 2020—but JLAP served 157 total

clients in 2020. Other trends in JLAP clients have continued from recent years. About a third of JLAP's clients are 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. Slightly more than half of JLAP's clients are female. The vast majority of JLAP clients are self-referrals, which is great, and the vast majority of JLAP's clients make contact for a mental health concern, while JLAP continues to serve some clients with substance use concerns.

JLAP staff also correctly anticipated that due to the pandemic, JLAP Foundation fundraising for referral grants would suffer a significant decline, and many steps have been taken to stretch extremely limited Foundation funding as far as possible for client grants. JLAP negotiated new rates with contract clinicians, tightened grant funding, and began encouraging JLAP clients with health insurance coverage to use their insurance, with JLAP paying copays and other expenses after insurance, rather than footing the entire bill for grant clients who had another source of payment. These measures have enabled grant funding to stretch more than ever. But the decrease in Foundation fundraising has been problematic. With more funding for grants, JLAP could utilize contract therapists and specialists more, and provide substantially more clinical services to clients in need. Increasing grant funding is a primary JLAP goal moving forward.

JLAP staff, the JLAP Committee, and JLAP volunteers also expanded the JLAP CLE program dramatically in 2020—taking advantage of the prevalence of “Zoom CLEs” to build a program of a dozen CLE programs that often had over 100 attendees in attendance for live sessions, which were offered free of charge. Each session was then made available via recording for a small fee, with proceeds directed to JLAP Foundation funds for client grants. JLAP plans to continue and expand this successful CLE programming, including outreach to Arkansas judges at any opportunity.

JLAP staff and the Committee also continued to brainstorm and work as much as possible on the attorney well-being movement in Arkansas. Many of the CLEs discussed above focused on well-being related topics, and were offered for ethics CLE credit but could be offered in the future for well-being credit if the Court begins to require well-being CLE credit as recommended by the Arkansas Task Force. JLAP also initiated “JLAP RAP” sessions—weekly group meetings via videoconference with JLAP clinicians in attendance, and “Mindfulness Tuesdays”—weekly group meetings led by JLAP contract therapists who guided attendees through meditation and other mindfulness tools. And JLAP continued outreach to both law schools, both in-person and via videoconference, to encourage well-being among law students.

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. A robust well-being program as envisioned in the Court's Arkansas Task Force Report would add a protective layer of prevention for the population, reducing the need for acute clinical services. JLAP staff has the knowledge and desire to lead on well-being, and believes that this should be a primary mission of JLAP because it is inextricably tied with JLAP's existing core mission. JLAP will continue to lead on the Arkansas well-being movement as much as possible, and hopes to expand these

efforts with additional funding and direction from the Court as envisioned in the Court's Task Force Report.

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, and we look forward to the future and implementation of goals and programs to better serve the judges, attorneys, and law students of Arkansas.

Colin Jorgensen, JLAP Chair

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## Letter from the Foundation Board Chair

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Although 2020 brought new challenges for the Arkansas JLAP Foundation Board (“the Foundation”), it persevered with the same commitment to ensuring access to mental health and substance use disorder services to the legal community as always. The purpose of the Foundation is to provide support to the Arkansas Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (“JLAP”), which provides mental health and substance use disorder services to judges, lawyers, their family members, and law students. JLAP is partially funded through lawyers’ license fees, but relies on public support in the form of charitable giving through our Foundation.

The Foundation’s main fundraiser is the annual JLAP Advocates Dinner. Due to the pandemic, the Foundation was unable to host the annual dinner for the first time in 10 years. Despite this setback, the Foundation reached out to our annual dinner sponsors individually and through our “12 Days of Giving” campaign and many sponsors made their annual contribution. The campaign also brought in individual donors.

The Foundation made increasing monthly recurring giving through our “Advocates at Heart” program a priority in 2020, which included monthly contributions from all Foundation Board members. It also sponsored a free continuing legal education series. Although the live continuing legal education presentations were mostly offered for free, the recordings were made available for purchase on-demand, bringing in additional funds.

Through the Foundation, JLAP was able to award 74 grants for individuals to receive mental health and substance use disorder services. These grants were awarded to judges, lawyers, their family members, and law students across the State. JLAP was also able to continue outreach efforts, including a continuing presence at the law schools and presentations to various organizations across the State.

With support from the Foundation, JLAP started a “Mindfulness Tuesday” series in 2020. This series allowed the law students to stay connected virtually during the pandemic while practicing mindfulness through movement and meditation with a licensed clinical social worker. The series was eventually opened up to the rest of the legal community.

Through creativity and determination, the Foundation and JLAP staff were able to mitigate the inevitable decrease in donations during the pandemic. We accomplished this by providing proactive resources to the legal community and taking advantage of programs designed to make treatment more accessible during the pandemic. Even through unprecedented times, the

Foundation has shown an unwavering commitment to the well-being of Arkansas's legal community.

*Cristy Park*

Cristy Park Chairperson of the Foundation  
JLAP EVENTS of 2020

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## 2020 EVENTS

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### **January 2020**

Meet and greet in Fayetteville at Bordinos--UA School of Law Student Representatives, Professors, Committee Member, local clinicians and JLAP volunteers (existing and new)  
Meeting with UA School of Law Dean  
Attended Brian Cuban presentation in Fayetteville at the law school, dinner with Brian, UA School of Law Dean, and others  
Drove Mr. Cuban to Little Rock and attended his Bowen presentation

### **February 2020**

Mid Winter Bar Tabling Presence and introduction of CLE Presenter, Michael Rexford  
Meet and greet in LR at Trios with Michael Rexford--Committee and Foundation Members, local clinicians and JLAP volunteers (existing and new)  
EMDR Training

### **March 2020**

Covid Response Planning: Implemented telehealth services through Zoom  
Initiated JLAP RAP Sessions  
JLAP Committee and Foundation Quarterly Meeting-Virtual  
Additional Contract Therapists Recruited

### **April 2020**

JLAP Rap for students & JLAP Rap for lawyers  
ATLA presentation CLE  
ED Article for ArkBar Magazine  
JLAP Free Virtual Ethics CLE Began on Thursdays Offered Through June  
Stress Less Fest for Bowen Students-Corky's BBQ Vouchers Drive-Thru

### **May 2020**

AAWL presentation CLE  
National Lawyer Wellbeing Week 4-8--JLAP Free Ethics CLE--Committee and Foundation Members Presenting as well as Clinicians and Treatment Providers

## **June 2020**

Mindfulness Hour: Tuesday's with Mary Horne Offered to JLAP Committee Members, Foundation Directors, Staff, and Volunteers

JLAP Website Redesign Planning

National Well-being Taskforce Update

JLAP Committee and Foundation Quarterly Meeting-Virtual

## **July 2020**

Mindfulness Hour: Tuesday's with Mary Horne Continues

National Wellness Institute Training

## **August 2020**

Self-Care for Law Students: Tuesday's with Mary Horne

Bowen Friends and Family Virtual First Week Presentation

EMDR Training

Additional Contract Therapists Recruited & Trained

## **September 2020**

Self-Care for Law Students: Tuesday's with Mary Horne Continues

Redesigned Website Launched

JLAP Committee and Foundation Quarterly Meeting-Virtual

## **October 2020**

Presentation, Election Stress Preparedness for Law Students

Additional Contract Therapists Recruited & Trained

## **November 2020**

JLAP Rap Returns for 1 Month

Stress Less Fest Safety Procedures for Law Students

Three Fold Dinner and Care Packages to Bowen Students

Care Packages delivered to UA School of Law Students

Annual Colap Conference Online--10 JLAP Representatives Attended

AR Lawyer Well-being Task Force Meeting

## **December 2020**

Newly Elected Judges CLE Presentation by Committee Chair

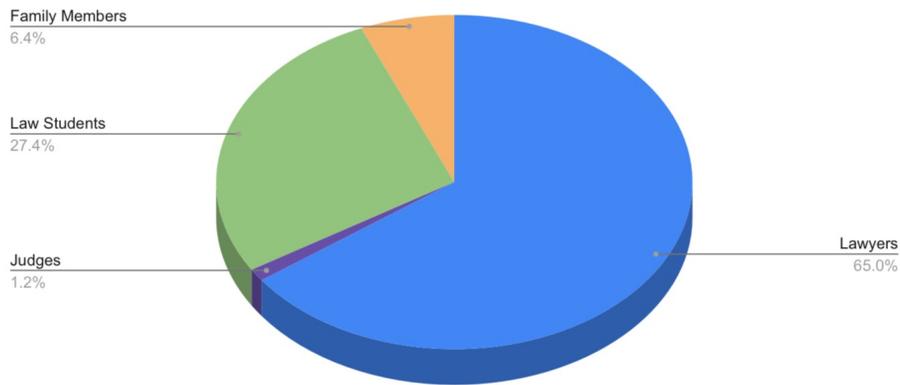
JLAP Committee and Foundation Quarterly Meeting-Virtual

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## 2020 Data

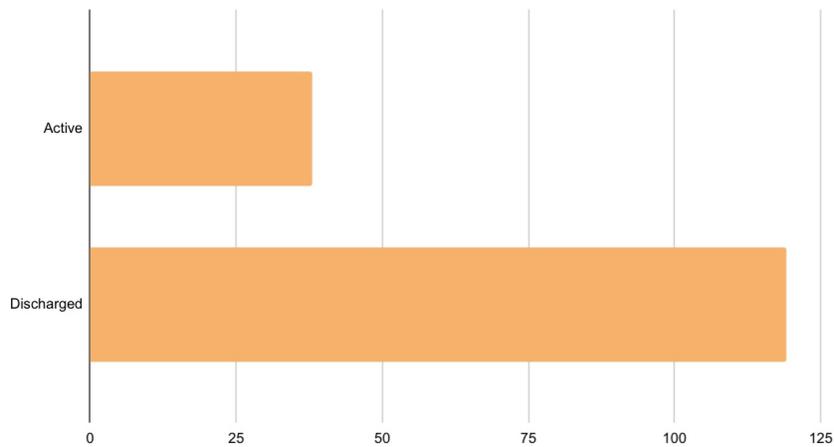
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Client by Type



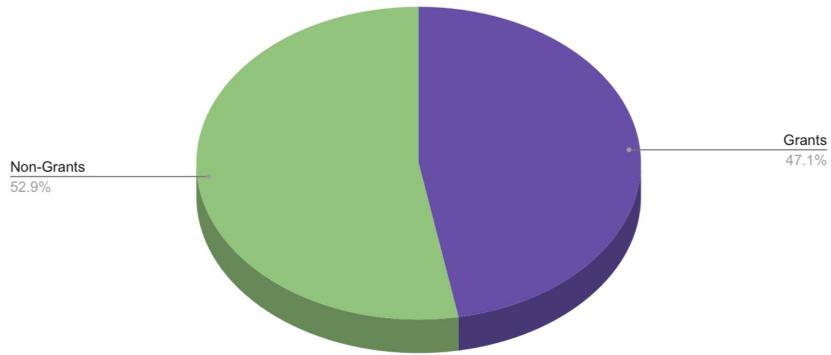
In 2020, JLAP received 243 contacts for assistance. JLAP staff engaged with 157 clients and assisted via referral or information call 86 individual contacts. At the end of 2020, 38 clients remained active with JLAP.

Client Status



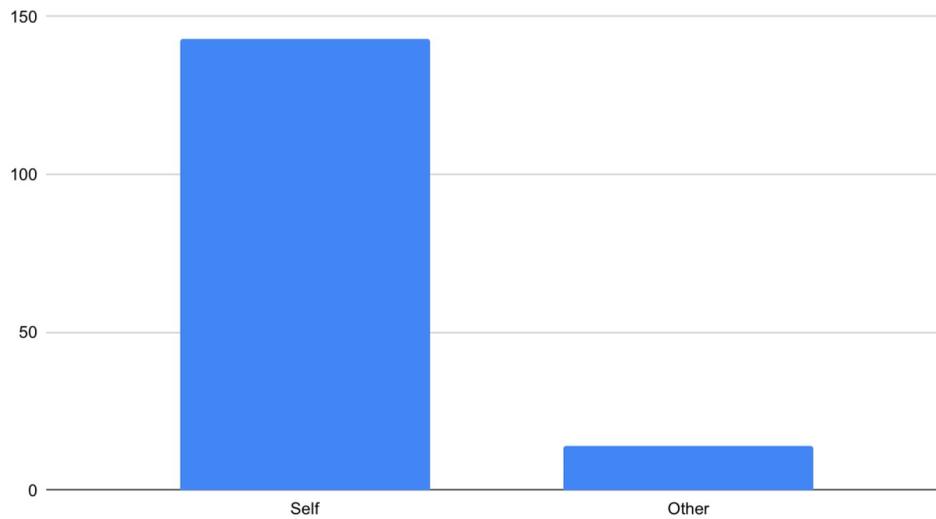
Of the 157 clients to come to JLAP in 2020, 24% remain active, 76% were discharged from services.

Clients by Funding Types



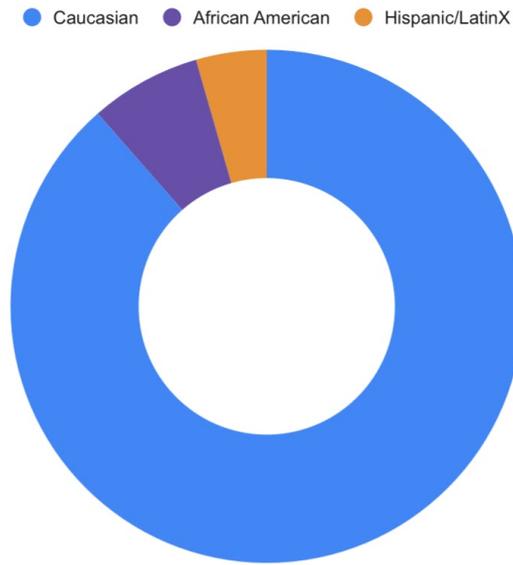
JLAP has provided 74 new clients this year with grants to help with their various needs including no-cost counseling for our rural clients.

Client Referral



JLAP finds that more clients are reaching out about the program and its services largely through CLEs, social media campaigns, and word of mouth by volunteers and former clients. JLAP saw an increase in self referral clients in 2020 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: 143 Other: 14)

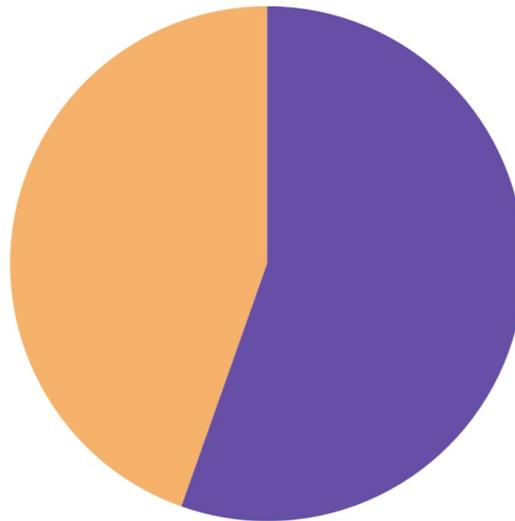
Client by Race



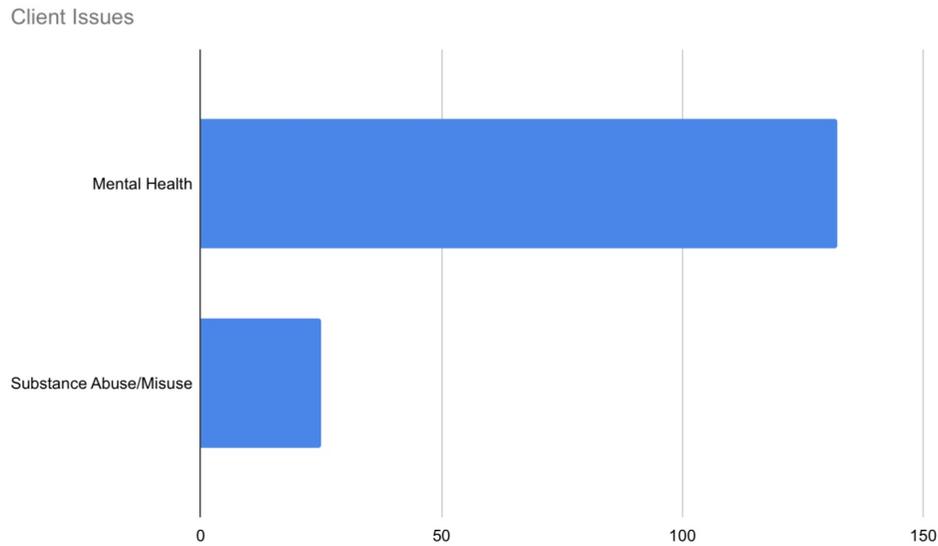
In 2020, JLAP services increased in diversity with a 7% African American client base and a 4% Hispanic/LatinoX client base. JLAP has continued to reach out to minority communities by offering diverse options for services and expanding inclusivity in our referral network.

Client by Gender

- Female
- Male

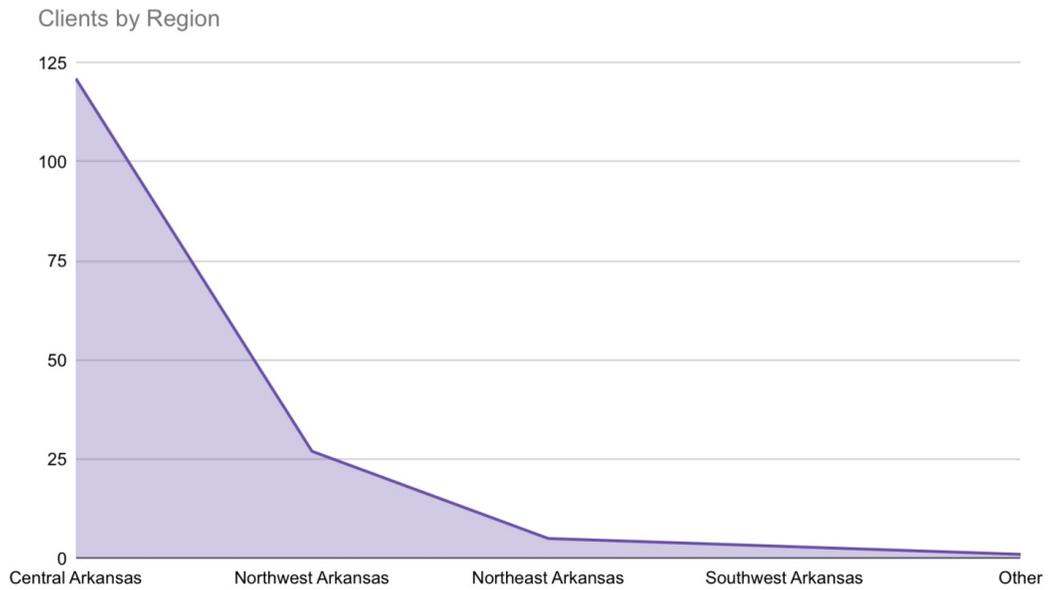


Gender representation continues to trend the same as in past years. JLAP served more female clients than male clients in 2020. (Male 45%; Female 55%)



Mental health concerns constitute 84% of client issues; this remains our most diversified category. Anxiety and/or depressed mood, overwhelming stress, and relationship issues are the most common presenting concerns; however, vicarious trauma, personal trauma, and grief/loss continue to increase with new referrals. 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. This year, pandemic related issues accompanied most presenting concerns within the mental health and substance use/misuse categories.

While excessive alcohol consumption still represents most reports of substance use issues, opioid and heroin are being reported more increasingly to JLAP staff. Substance use/misuse is most commonly secondary to underlying mental health issues; although it is the initial concern for 16% of 2020 clients.



JLAP offers services throughout the state, with a large concentration of services being provided in Central and Northwest Arkansas. Efforts to increase service awareness in other parts of the state continued in 2020. With the new capability of telehealth, JLAP hopes these efforts will allow more areas to take advantage of JLAP services.

Location of clients served:

Central AR: 121

NWA: 27

NEA: 5

SWA: 3

Other: 1