

October 13, 2021



Illinois Supreme Court Streamlines LAP Funding

On September 21, 2021, the Illinois Supreme Court adopted Rule 43 and amended Rules 751 and 756, effective January 1, 2022. These were adopted as a result of the repeal of the Lawyers' Assistance Program Act, which was repealed in order to streamline the process of Illinois Lawyers' Assistance Program (LAP) funding. New Rule 43 affirmed the official description, role as provider, fee, and reporting for LAP. LAP's annual report filed to the Supreme Court will detail the progress of the program, services provided, the number of eligible recipients who received services, the effectiveness of its activities, and any significant problem areas that developed and how they were resolved. The amendments to Rule 751 and 756 streamline the funding of LAP so that LAP is funded directly from the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission which is the body that collects LAP fees included in attorney registration fees.

The order adopting new Rule 43 and amending Rules 751 and 756 is available [here](#).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, LAP has seen an increase in mental health issues, substance use, and financial stressors for judges, lawyers, and law students. Studies showed even before the pandemic that the legal profession had substantially higher rates of mental health and substance use issues than the general population. This has only increased with the pandemic due to increased isolation and less access to supportive services. To address these issues, LAP created HIPAA compliant telehealth services to provide equal access throughout the state to LAP clinicians, and have expanded outreach, assessments, weekly support groups, and consults to legal agencies and firms who need assistance in managing workforce problems.

All services at LAP are free and confidential with immunity under Supreme Court Rule 1.6, allowing more legal professionals to reach out without fear and stigma. LAP and its resources are proactive in minimizing risk and creating a population of legal professionals who can recover and have robust and healthy legal careers and lives. Due to increased outreach, annual volunteer trainings, presentations, CLEs, and the creation of more [LAP Locals](#) throughout the state, we have increased self-referral rates from 39% to 71% in less than four years.

As a result of these changes within the legal profession due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Illinois Supreme Court approved an increase in funding to LAP from \$10 per attorney to \$20 per attorney beginning on July 1, 2021. These additional funds will be distributed to LAP directly by the ARDC to continue to provide services to legal professionals throughout the state.

“LAP is grateful for the increased support that the Supreme Court has demonstrated to LAP during these challenging times,” said Dr. Diana Uchiyama, Executive Director of LAP. “This increased partnership will benefit all judges, lawyers and law students in the State of Illinois - now and into the future.”

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The [Illinois Lawyers' Assistance Program \(LAP\)](#), a not-for profit organization, has been helping judges, Lawyers, and law students since 1980. LAP has a three-fold mission: to protect the interests of clients and others from harm caused by impaired judges and attorneys; to help impaired judges, attorneys, law students, and their families get assistance for alcohol dependency, drug addiction, mental health problems, and or other addictive behaviors in recovery; and to educate the legal community about addiction and mental health.

**If you or someone you know needs support with mental health or wellbeing, contact LAP.
gethelp@illinoislap.org, 312-726-6607**

Real Problems. Real Help. Real Experts.

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