

# OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## Statement of Mission

The purpose of the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program (OAAP) is:

1. To provide assistance to Oregon lawyers and judges who experience problem alcohol, drug, and/or other substance use, burnout, career transition, depression, anxiety, compulsive disorders (including Internet, sex, and gambling addictions), time management issues, relationship issues, stress, or other distress that impairs ability to function effectively;
2. To aid in the curtailment of malpractice claims and disciplinary complaints;
3. To educate the legal community about sources of distress and/or impairment, such as the disease of alcoholism, problem substance use, anxiety, depression, relationship issues, compulsive disorders, chronic illness, and career transition;
4. To educate the legal community and the families of Oregon lawyers and judges about the scope of services offered by the OAAP and resources that are available for assistance.

## Philosophy and Approach

The OAAP is based on the philosophy of lawyers helping lawyers. All OAAP attorney counselors are lawyers and professionally trained counselors. As a result, we are able to establish a unique rapport with members of the legal community.

The OAAP encourages the involvement of family members, colleagues, coworkers, partners, friends, and others who are concerned about a lawyer, judge, or other member of the legal community who is experiencing distress. In some situations (alcoholism, chemical dependency, addiction, depression), the person with the disease or problem may deny that he or she is in need of assistance. Involvement of concerned others can help break the denial barrier and lead to effective assistance. At times, the person's condition may be interfering with his or her ability to seek help. Contacting the OAAP for information will begin the process of confidential assistance.

## Scope of Program

The OAAP is available to all Oregon lawyers and judges. In addition, to the extent permitted by available resources, the OAAP is also available to law office staff, court staff, families of lawyers, families of judges, and law students in Oregon law schools. The OAAP provides assistance with wide range of issues including:

1. Alcoholism
2. Problem drug and/or substance use
3. Prescription drug misuse
4. Recovery support
5. Career change and satisfaction
6. Depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues

7. Compulsive disorders (including gambling, sex, and Internet addictions)
8. Coping with malpractice claims or discipline complaints
9. Procrastination and time management
10. Relationship issues
11. Stress management
12. Retirement transitions

The OAAP provides initial assistance, intervention, support, and referrals. Referrals include community, public, and private sources for services, including therapists, treatment centers, support groups, and other appropriate resources.

OAAP is not a treatment program or a mental health facility.

### Confidentiality

All communications with the OAAP are completely confidential and will not affect a person's standing with the Professional Liability Fund or the Oregon State Bar. No information will be disclosed to any person, agency, or organization outside the OAAP without the consent of the person accessing the program. Contacts with us are kept strictly confidential pursuant to ORS 9.568; PLF Policies 6.150 - 6.300; OSB Bylaws, Article 24; Oregon Rule Professional Conduct 8.3(c)(3), and Oregon Code of Judicial Conduct JR 2-104(C). The only exceptions are: (1) to avert a serious, imminent threat to the lawyer's health or safety or that of another person; and (2) to comply with legal obligations such as ORS 419B.010 and ORS 124.060 (child abuse and elder abuse).

All confidentiality protections and privileges provided under state, federal, Oregon State Bar, and Professional Liability Fund rules and regulations, and all other available protections, shall be asserted to the utmost against any attempts to obtain information. Individuals who access the OAAP are exempt from the reporting requirements of ORPC 8.3 and OCJC 2-104(C), provided that they obtained the information while participating in an OAAP program. Communications with the OAAP staff can be anonymous, if the person accessing the program prefers.

### Physical Location of OAAP

OAAP services are provided at a physical location that is separate from the Oregon State Bar and the OSB Professional Liability Fund offices to maintain the program's commitment to confidentiality and anonymity and to encourage participation in the programs.

### Record Keeping

The OAAP maintains statistical data, including the number of people accessing the OAAP and the type of services provided. Statistical reports are produced periodically as requested by the program executive director. The statistical reports do not disclose the identity of any person who has received assistance from the OAAP, and in all cases the confidentiality of program participants will be maintained consistent with the provisions of ORS 9.568 and applicable Bar and PLF policies.

### Qualifications of OAAP staff

All OAAP attorney counselors: (1) are licensed attorneys; (2) have experience or training in alcohol and chemical dependency, intervention, mental health issues, group dynamics, and public speaking; (3) have an understanding of or experience with 12-step programs; and (4) if in recovery, have at least five consecutive years of recovery. OAAP attorney counselors attain CEAP (Certified Employee Assistance Professional), CADC (Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor), or other comparable counseling credentials within four years of employment at the OAAP and maintain the certification or credentials in addition to other appropriate continuing education.

### Cost of Services

Involvement in the OAAP is at no or low cost to the program participant.