



Utah Office of Professional Conduct

Annual Report
2025



Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Types of Cases Handled by the OPC	1
	A. <u>Administrative Cases</u>	1
	B. <u>Cases in Utah Courts</u>	2
III.	OPC Personnel	3
IV.	2025 Case Numbers	4
	A. <u>Administrative Cases</u>	4
	1. Administrative Cases Pending at the Beginning of 2025	4
	2. Administrative Cases Opened in 2025	4
	3. Administrative Cases Pending at the End of 2025	5
	B. <u>Court Cases</u>	5
	1. Court Cases Pending at the Beginning of 2025	5
	2. Court Cases Opened in 2025	6
	3. Court Cases Pending at the End of 2025	7
V.	Cases Closures in 2025 – Administrative and Court Cases	7
	A. <u>Appeals of Dismissals to the Ethics & Discipline Committee</u>	9
VI.	2025 Screening Panel Outcomes	9
	A. <u>Exceptions to Screening Panel Determinations - 2025</u>	10
VII.	District Court Case Outcomes	10
VIII.	2025 Rule Violations	11
IX.	OPC Performance Metrics	12
X.	Other OPC Work Performed in 2025	15
	A. <u>Disciplinary History Reports</u>	15

B.	<u>Miscellaneous Inquiries</u>	15
C.	<u>Special Prosecutor Cases</u>	16
D.	<u>CLE Presentations</u>	16
E.	<u>Service on Utah State Bar and Supreme Court Committees</u>	16
XI.	OPC Goals	16

I. Introduction

This report addresses the work of the Utah Office of Professional Conduct (“OPC”) over the year 2025. The Utah Supreme Court Rules of Professional Practice describe the OPC’s two-fold mandate as maintaining “the high standard of professional conduct required of those who undertake the discharge of professional responsibilities as Lawyers”¹ and protecting “the public and the administration of justice from those [Lawyers] who have demonstrated by their conduct that they are unable or unlikely to properly discharge their professional responsibilities.” Sup. Ct. R. Prof’l Prac. 1-501(a). To that end, the OPC’s responsibilities are to screen, investigate and prosecute lawyers for violations of the Utah Rules of Professional Conduct. *See, e.g., id.* 1-521(a)(1)-(4).

The OPC’s most significant challenge for 2025 was a substantial increase in the number of complaints filed against Utah attorneys and licensed paralegal practitioners. As explained below, the office received over 500 more complaints in 2025 than in 2024. As a result, the OPC’s overall caseload has increased, its existing resources and employees have been taxed, and backlog has continued, if not worsened. For these and related reasons, the OPC aims to add an attorney to its staff within the next year, and it expects that ongoing assessments will be required to assess the need for additional personnel.

II. Types of Cases Handled by the OPC

A. Administrative Cases

The OPC opens cases against individual lawyers based on the following types of events and information:

- complaints filed by individuals, judges, or law firms;
- information reported by lawyers regarding their own conduct (“lawyer self-reports”);
- information gleaned from media or court sources (“media/court cases”); and
- reports of insufficient funds on attorney IOLTA accounts (“NSF cases”).

With respect to the first category, the OPC conducts an initial screening of a complaint to determine whether additional investigation and/or prosecution is warranted. If it is clear from the face of a complaint that the allegations do not establish probable cause that a lawyer has violated the Rules of Professional Conduct, the OPC will dismiss the complaint. Most complaints submitted to the OPC are dismissed at the initial screening phase. For cases that are not dismissed, the OPC will commence an investigation and, if appropriate, prepare a Notice to the

¹ The term “Lawyer” includes both licensed attorneys and licensed paralegal practitioners (“LPPs”), who are also subject to the OPC’s jurisdiction. *See* Sup. Ct. R. Prof’l Prac. 1-502(k).

respondent identifying the rules the OPC alleges the respondent has violated.² Once the lawyer has had an opportunity to respond to the Notice, the OPC will present the case for a hearing before a screening panel of the Utah Supreme Court’s Ethics and Discipline Committee (the “Committee”). Upon conducting a hearing, the screening panels have the authority to dismiss a case, impose lower-level discipline in the form of a private admonition or public reprimand, or instruct the OPC to file a case against a lawyer in district court.

As to cases that fall within the latter three categories, the OPC opens cases to investigate the facts or monitor developments but does not prosecute the cases or prepare a complaint unless the allegations and facts suggest that a lawyer has violated the Rules of Professional Conduct. For example, with respect to lawyer self-reports, the OPC sometimes determines that the purported misconduct does not rise to the level of a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct or does not otherwise warrant discipline. Similarly, with respect to media/court matters, the OPC may discover that criminal charges are being contemplated or have been filed against a lawyer, but it may elect to decline to prosecute the case where, for example, the criminal charges are ultimately dismissed or where the lawyer successfully completes a plea in abeyance as to a less-serious criminal charge. The same is true when the OPC receives a report of insufficient funds in an IOLTA account from a financial institution, i.e., the OPC may elect not to pursue such a case when, for example, a lawyer sufficiently explains the reason for the overdraft and demonstrates that no misuse of client funds occurred.

This report refers to cases at the screening, investigation, and screening panel phases as “Administrative Cases.”

B. Cases in Utah Courts

The OPC also pursues cases in Utah courts, including in state district courts and the Utah Supreme Court. These cases include the following categories:

- Cases in which Committee screening panels have instructed the OPC to file an Action³ in district court under Supreme Court Rule of Professional Practice 1-531(i)(5)-(6);
- Cases in which the OPC seeks reciprocal discipline following the imposition of discipline against a lawyer in another jurisdiction under Rule 1-567;

² As defined in the Supreme Court Rules of Professional Practice, a “Notice” identifies the potential violations of the rules of Professional Conduct “raised by the Complaint as the OPC has preliminarily determined.” Sup. Ct. R. Prof’l Prac. 1-502(n).

³ For purposes of disciplinary proceedings, an “Action” is defined as “a lawsuit filed by the OPC in district court alleging lawyer misconduct or seeking to transfer a Lawyer to disability status.” Sup. Ct. R. Prof’l Prac. 11-502(a).

- Cases in which the OPC seeks interim discipline under Rule 1-563 (interim suspension for risk of harm or disability) or Rule 1-564(b) (interim suspension following a finding of guilt or entry of a plea to a crime “that reflects adversely on the Lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness to practice law”);
- Cases in which lawyers who have been placed on probation, suspended, or delicensed apply to terminate their probation or be reinstated or relicensed to practice of law under Rule 1-590 or 1-591;
- Cases in which the OPC seeks to transfer a lawyer to disability status under Rule 1-568; and
- Cases in which lawyers who are the subject of OPC investigation or litigation propose or agree to resign with discipline pending under Rule 1-566, which may only be accomplished with the consent of the Utah Supreme Court.

In addition to the foregoing categories, appeals of final discipline imposed by the Committee and of district court rulings—whether filed by the OPC or a lawyer respondent—are heard by the Utah Supreme Court. *See* Sup. Ct. R. Prof’l Prac. 1-535(a) & 1-536(f).

This report refers to cases pursued in Utah’s courts, including appeals before the Utah Supreme Court, as “court cases” or “Actions.”

III. OPC Personnel

The OPC is staffed by six Disciplinary Counsel and six paralegals. Three of the attorneys focus primarily on investigation and presentation of cases to screening panels of the Utah Supreme Court’s Ethics and Discipline Committee (the “Committee”), i.e., Administrative Cases, while the remaining three attorneys focus primarily on prosecuting disciplinary cases in the courts, i.e., Actions. The split between the two categories of attorneys is not absolute, however, in that all OPC Disciplinary Counsel participate to some degree in both Administrative and court cases as needed. Over the past year, the office has also been experimenting with different work allocations to see if efficiencies can be developed to improve case processing times.

One of the OPC’s six paralegals is devoted mainly to case intake, which involves logging all complaints, communicating with and assisting individuals who desire to file complaints, and assigning complaints to the appropriate OPC attorneys and paralegals. This paralegal also prepares initial drafts of all disciplinary history reports processed in the office. Two OPC paralegals are devoted primarily to assisting with Actions in district court and, when needed, appeals before the Utah Supreme Court. The remaining three paralegals assist mostly with Administrative Cases, although each has extra duties, including assisting with compiling the numbers for the OPC annual report, preparing summary review dismissal letters, preparing reports on discipline for the Utah Bar Journal, and alerting other jurisdictions of the imposition of discipline. One of the paralegals who assists with Administrative Cases is also designated and

has training as an investigator, which means that she assists with gathering information that may not otherwise be readily available through public resources.

IV. 2025 Case Numbers⁴

A. Administrative Cases

1. Administrative Cases Pending at the Beginning of 2025

As of January 1, 2025, the OPC had 335 cases that remained open and pending at the administrative level from prior years. This number was up by 36 from the start of 2024, at which point the OPC had 299 open and pending cases. The breakdown in the status of these cases is as follows:

Open Administrative Cases		
	1/1/2024	1/1/2025
Complaint-Open	284	273
Abeyance-Open	13	17
Diversion-Open	2	3
Complaint Voted Action	0	11
Complaint-Summary Review	0	31
	299	335

2. Administrative Cases Opened in 2025

In 2025, the OPC opened 1,334 new cases against 808 individual lawyers, including one lawyer who was the subject of 193 complaints. This number reflects an increase of 537 new cases as compared to the total number of cases opened in 2024, which was 797 new cases against 509 individual lawyers.

As reflected in the table below, of the 1,334 new cases opened in 2025, 1,310 were based on complaints filed with the OPC by clients, opposing parties or lawyers, law firms, or other individuals. Judges submitted seven complaints in 2025; lawyers reported their own conduct to the OPC in eleven cases; and, in six cases, the OPC prepared complaints based on information obtained from other sources, such as media reports and court dockets. This increase in the number of complaints is substantial and, as noted above, has increased the office's workload and taxed its resources.

⁴ The data presented in this report is intended to provide a general overview of the OPC's caseload and work performance. Although the OPC has made efforts to ensure accuracy, the data include certain errors and approximations due to software limitations and human error in data recording.

Case Type	Admin. Cases Opened in 2025	Admin. Cases Opened in 2024
Complaints	1,310	770
Complaints filed by Judges	7	1
Self-Reports	11	9
OPC-Initiated Complaints	6	17
Total:	1,334	797

3. Administrative Cases Pending at the End of 2025

As of December 31, 2025, the OPC had 490 open administrative cases. This is an increase of 155 cases from the beginning of 2025, at which point the OPC had 335 open cases (as noted above). As with the increased number of cases opened during the year, the increase in the number of cases that remained pending at the end of the year is substantial and reflective of the OPC’s need for additional personnel.

Open Administrative Cases		
	1/1/2025	12/31/2025
Complaint-Open	273	379
Abeyance-Open	17	19
Diversion-Open	3	0
Complaint Voted Action	11	9
Complaint-Summary Review	31	83
	335	490

B. Court Cases

1. Court Cases Pending at the Beginning of 2025

The table below shows that, as of January 1, 2025, the OPC had twenty-five cases pending in Utah courts. Specifically, the OPC had seventeen Actions pending in district court; one case in which the OPC was seeking the imposition of reciprocal discipline under Rule 1-567; two cases in which lawyers were seeking reinstatement or readmission to the practice of law following a suspension or delicensure; one case in which the OPC was seeking interim discipline under Rule 1-564;⁵ two cases in which the OPC filed to appoint or be appointed as trustee for a lawyer’s law practice; and two appeals pending before the Utah Supreme Court. This number was slightly down from the beginning of 2024, when the OPC had a total of thirty cases pending before Utah courts.

⁵ In addition to filing an Action at the direction of a Committee screening panel, the OPC may file directly in district court a petition for interim discipline based on a threat of serious harm to the public, *see* Sup. Ct. R. Prof’l Prac. 1-563, or a petition for interim suspension after a lawyer has been convicted of or pled guilty to “a felony or misdemeanor that reflects adversely on the Lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness to practice law.” *Id.* R. 1-564(b).

Open Court Cases		
	1/1/2024	1/1/2025
Action-Open	18	17
Reciprocal - Open	2	1
Reinstatement - Open	2	2
11-563 - Open	1	0
11-564 - Open	3	1
Trusteeship - Open	2	2
Supreme Court Appeal - Open	2	2
	30	25

2. Court Cases Opened in 2025

In 2025, the OPC filed or responded to a total of twenty-four cases in Utah’s district courts. The OPC filed eleven Actions at the direction of Committee screening panels. The OPC also filed three cases in which the respondents agreed to waive their hearings before Committee screening panels, in anticipation of stipulating to discipline before a district court. In addition, the OPC filed three cases under Rule 1-538 seeking to appoint the OPC as trustee for the law practices of deceased lawyers or incapacitated lawyers,⁶ and the OPC responded to seven petitions for reinstatement or relicensure filed by respondents. Compared with 2024, when the OPC opened twenty-four cases, the total number of court cases remained constant.

District Court Cases Opened in 2025		
Case Type	Court Cases Opened in 2025	Court Cases Opened in 2024
Action	11	13
Reciprocal	0	4
Reinstatement Petitions	7	4
11-563 Interim Discipline	0	0
11-564 Interim Discipline	0	0
Trusteeship	3	3
Formal Appeal	0	0
Screening Panel Waived	3	0
Total:	24	24

⁶ Rule 1-538(a) provides that, when a lawyer has died, cannot be located, or has been suspended, delicensed, or transferred to disability status and has failed to comply with Rule 1-570, and where “no partner, executor, or other responsible party capable of conducting the Lawyer’s . . . affairs is known to exist,” a district court may appoint a trustee “to inventory the Lawyer’s . . . files, notify the Lawyer’s . . . clients, distribute the files to the clients, return unearned fees or other funds, and take any additional action the judge authorizes.” Sup. Ct. R. Prof’l Prac. 1-538(a).

3. Court Cases Pending at the End of 2025

As of December 31, 2025, the OPC had a total of twenty-four cases pending in court, including fourteen disciplinary Actions, four reinstatement petitions, five trusteeships, and one appeal before the Utah Supreme Court. The table below reflects these numbers. While the number of court cases pending at the end of 2025 went up by just one case from the beginning of the year, one notable area in which the numbers have risen involves trusteeships for lawyers. While the litigation involved in trusteeships is not complex or exceedingly burdensome, the work required to complete a trusteeship and report to the court can be substantial in terms of the effort required to inventory the lawyers' files, contact clients and offer to return their files, and assess the disposition of any funds remaining in their attorney trust accounts. This aspect of the OPC's work is one where the OPC may want to consider alternatives in the future. Possibilities include requiring attorneys to designate an attorney to wind up their practice and handle files and unearned funds; requiring attorneys to contribute to a fund designated for conducting trusteeships; recruiting volunteer attorneys to assist with OPC trusteeships; and/or appointing an inventory review counsel to coordinate these matters.

Open Court Cases		
	1/1/2025	12/31/2025
Action-Open	17	14
Reciprocal - Open	1	0
Reinstatement - Open	2	4
11-563 - Open	0	0
11-564 - Open	1	0
Trusteeship - Open	2	5
Supreme Court Appeal - Open	2	1
	25	24

V. Case Closures in 2025 - Administrative and Court Cases

As shown below, the OPC closed a total of 1,098 cases in 2025. Included in this number are cases that were already pending at the beginning of the year and cases that were opened in 2025.

Among the cases closed in 2025 are 1,031 cases in which the OPC dismissed or declined to prosecute complaints at the administrative level. In conjunction with 28 of those dismissals, the OPC issued letters of caution to respondents, in which the OPC offers advice about avoiding ethical violations implicated by the allegations in the complaint in the future. With respect to the OPC's dismissed cases, the OPC carefully reviews the materials submitted by the complainant and drafts a letter setting forth the reasons why the complaint's allegations are unsupported by fact, insufficient to establish probable cause of a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct, barred by the statute of limitations, or more adequately addressed in another forum. *See Sup. Ct.*

R Prof'l Prac. 1-530(g). The OPC also has discretion to decline to prosecute cases, in which case it explains in writing the reasons for the declination.

In four of the closed cases, the OPC was able to reach agreements with respondents prior to taking the cases to screening panel hearings. In each of these cases, the respondents stipulated to appropriate discipline.⁷ Screening panels dismissed five cases presented to them by the OPC and, in an additional five cases, the screening panels imposed discipline.⁸ In eighteen cases, district courts imposed discipline in Actions filed by the OPC, and in one case the Utah Supreme Court affirmed the screening panel's imposition of a public reprimand following an appeal by the respondent. A total of five reinstatement cases were closed. Two cases closed without the entry of a reinstatement order,⁹ while three cases ended with the entry of orders of reinstatement.

In twenty-one of the cases closed in 2025, the OPC combined outstanding administrative cases into Actions that had already been commenced by the OPC. And, in the remaining eight cases, the OPC declined to prosecute the cases due to serious discipline having already been imposed in court on the respondents. In such cases, the OPC "holds the cases for reinstatement," which means that if a suspended or delicensed lawyer files a petition for reinstatement or relicensure, the OPC will assess at that time whether the case may be asserted as evidence against reinstatement or relicensure.

Cases Closed - 2025	
OPC Dismissals/Declinations to Prosecute	1,031
Stipulated Discipline Prior to Screening Panel Hearing	4
Dismissed by Screening Panel	5
Discipline Imposed by Screening Panel	5
Actions Closed with Discipline	19
Reinstatement Granted	3
Reinstatement Closed	2
Combined with Formal Cases	21
Hold for Reinstatement	8
Total	1,098

⁷ These agreements are permitted under Rule 1-565(a). *See* Sup. Ct. R. Prof'l Prac. 1-565(a). The proposed discipline must be approved by the Committee Chair. *See id.*

⁸ Screening panel hearing results are discussed in greater detail below.

⁹ In these two cases, the matters were closed after the respondents failed to comply with the requirements for reinstatement or relicensure.

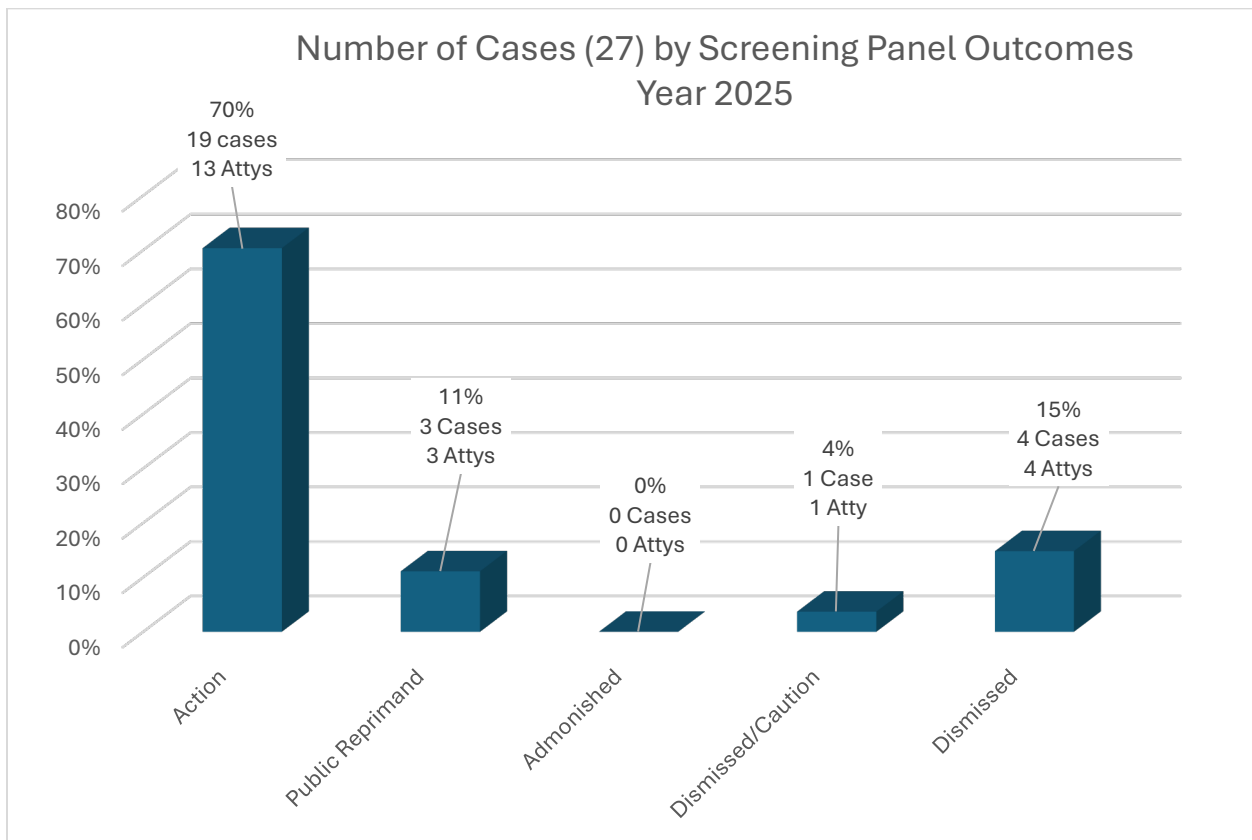
A. Appeals of OPC Dismissals to the Ethics & Discipline Committee

During the year 2025, complainants filed 175 appeals of OPC dismissals to the Chair of the Committee. This number is significantly higher than in 2024, when complainants filed sixty-six appeals. The chair reversed and remanded seven cases in 2025.

VI. **2025 Screening Panel Outcomes**

In cases where the OPC cannot resolve a complaint or where the complaint “alleges facts that, by their very nature, should be brought before a screening panel,” the OPC issues a Notice to the respondent under Rule 1-530(e) of the Supreme Court Rules of Professional Practice. As noted above, a Notice is essentially the charging document that alerts a respondent to the violations the OPC alleges to have occurred. *See Sup. Ct. R. Prof’l Prac. 1-502(n).*

In 2025, OPC disciplinary counsel presented twenty-seven cases against twenty lawyers to screening panels for hearing. In nineteen of the cases, the screening panel voted to instruct the OPC to file an Action in district court. The screening panels imposed three public reprimands but did not impose any private admonitions. In addition, the screening panels dismissed four cases and dismissed one with a letter of caution to the respondent. These results are reflected in the following table:



A. Exceptions to Screening Panel Determinations - 2025

On June 9, 2025, the OPC filed an exception to a screening panel's recommendation that a respondent privately admonished for a violation of Utah Rule of Professional Conduct 1.8(a), arguing that decreasing the presumptive sanction two levels due to mitigating factors was improper. On August 18, 2025, the Committee chair denied the exception and upheld the screening panel's determination.

No respondents filed exceptions in 2025.

VII. District Court Case Outcomes

As indicated above, the OPC closed nineteen Actions in 2025 that either were pending at the beginning of 2025 or had been filed in 2025.

The courts in two of these Actions entered orders of delicensure, which is the most severe sanction available in lawyer disciplinary cases. In one of the cases, which previously had resulted in a suspension, a district court entered an order of delicensure after the OPC filed a motion accusing the respondent of violating a suspension order that had previously been entered.

In one Action filed by the OPC, the respondent petitioned the Utah Supreme Court for permission to resign with discipline pending under Rule 1-566 of the Supreme Court Rules of Professional Practice.¹⁰ Because a respondent may not apply for relicensure for five years after the effective date of a resignation with discipline pending, such a resignation is similar in effect to delicensure. Sup. Ct. R. Prof'l Prac. 1-566(e).

In three cases, the courts entered orders of suspension. Two such cases involved two-year suspensions, and the other involved a three-year suspension. In one additional case, a court entered an order of interim suspension pending the ultimate outcome in the case.

In seven of the Actions, the courts entered orders placing the respondents on probation for terms ranging from six months to two years. In another case, the court entered an order placing the respondent on a three-year suspension, with the suspension stayed for a three-year probation, so long as the respondent complied with the terms of the probation. A violation of the probation will result in a sanctions hearing to determine what portion of the stayed suspension should then be imposed.

Courts in two Actions entered private orders of admonition and, as noted above, the Utah Supreme Court affirmed the Committee's imposition of a public reprimand following an appeal by the Respondent.

¹⁰ If the Supreme Court approves the petition for resignation, "it will enter an order specifying the effective date of the resignation. The order may include additional or alternative terms and conditions deemed appropriate, including conditions precedent to relicensure." Sup. Ct. R. Prof'l Prac. 1-566(d).

In nine of the nineteen Actions discussed above, the outcomes were the result of stipulations between the OPC and the respondents, which must be approved by the district court presiding over the case. *See id.* 1-565(b).

VIII. 2025 Rule Violations

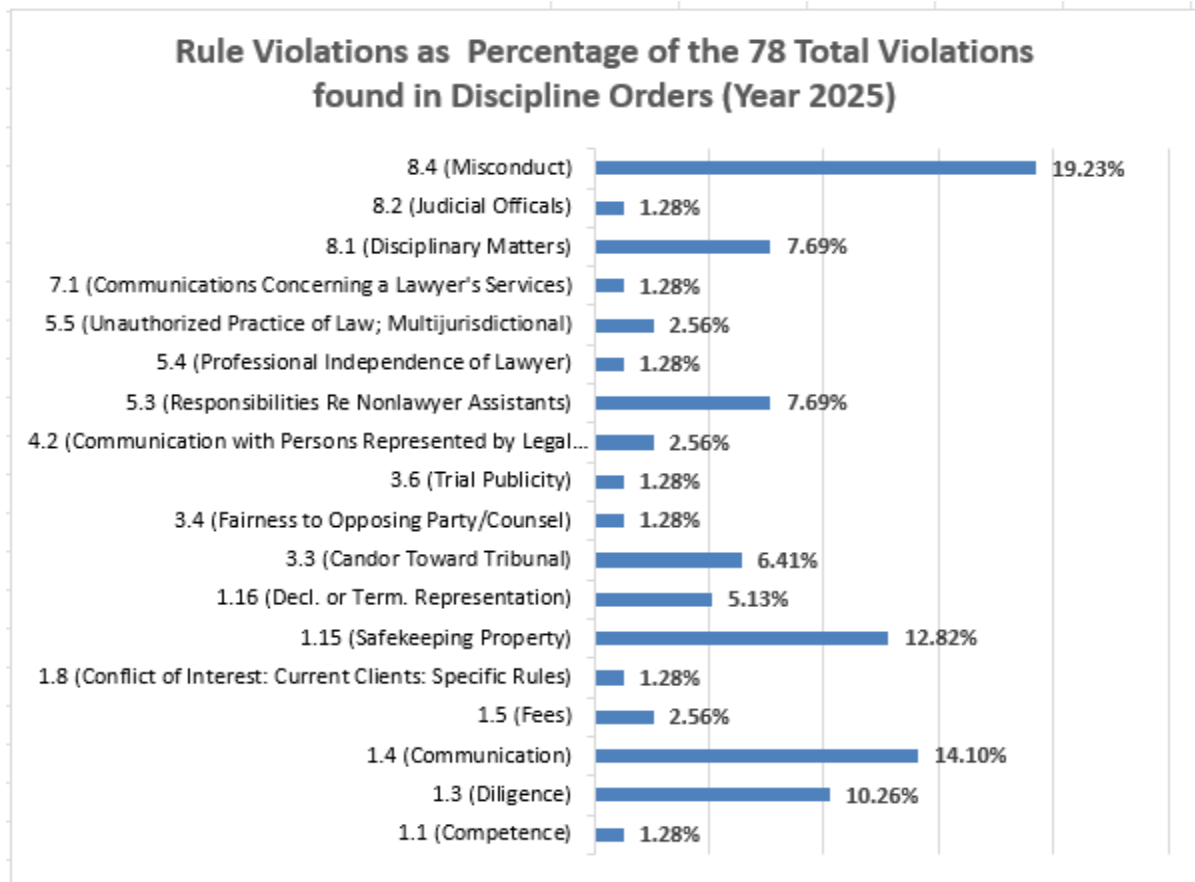
District courts and screening panels entered a total of twenty-five orders of discipline in 2025. These discipline orders reflect a total of seventy-eight violations of various Rules of Professional Conduct.

Violations of Rule 8.4 (Misconduct) were most frequent, with a total of fifteen violations. Four of these violations pertained to Rule 8.4(c), which proscribes “conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation;” four of the violations pertained to Rule 8.4(d), which prohibits conduct “prejudicial to the administration of justice;” and eight of the violations pertained to Rule 8.4(b), which provides that it is professional misconduct to “commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects.”

Violations of Rule 1.4 (Communication) ranked second for 2025, with a total of twelve violations. Ten of the twelve violations were of Rule 1.4(a), which includes five subsections but generally requires lawyers to keep clients informed about various aspects of the representation and the status of their legal matters. *See Utah R. Prof’l Cond. 1.4(a)(1)-(a)(5)*. The remaining two violations were of Rule 1.4(b), which requires lawyers to sufficiently explain matters “to permit a client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.” *Id.* 1.4(b).

Coming in at third—with a total of ten violations—was Rule 1.15. Respondents committed four violations of Rule 1.15(a), which prohibits comingling of a lawyer’s funds with a client’s funds and requires lawyers to account for client funds and property and preserve such records for five years after a representation is terminated. *Id.* R. 1.15(a). Respondents violated Rule 1.15(c)—which requires funds paid in advance to be deposited in a trust account and withdrawn only as earned—five separate times. Finally, one lawyer violated Rule 1.15(d), which requires lawyers to provide a full accounting of property held for a client or another party “upon request.” *Id.* R. 1.15(d).

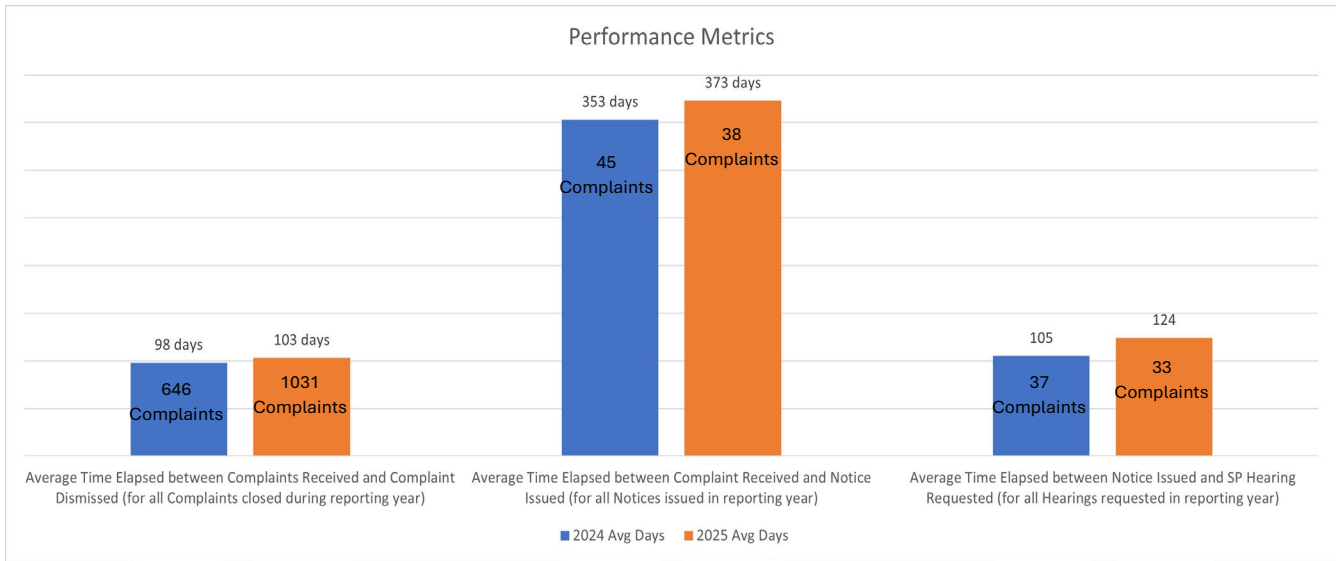
Although the following table does not distinguish between subsections of the rules violated in 2025, the main rule violations shown by percentage follow:



IX. OPC Performance Metrics

The OPC has and likely will continue to have unresolved cases, including cases that take longer to resolve than desired. The OPC also opened 537 more cases in 2025 than it did in 2024, reflecting an overall increase in caseload. This means that the OPC has and will continue to accumulate case backlogs. Notwithstanding these issues, the OPC continues to strive to increase the speed with which it processes and resolves cases, while at the same time ensuring that its work is professional, responsible, and thorough. Balancing the need to advance cases to completion with the desire to address each case with appropriate attention and care is among the OPC’s top priorities. The OPC’s time-to-disposition numbers for 2025, set alongside the numbers for 2024, appear below.

The chart below focuses on the average times it takes from the time a case is opened to (1) the date by which a case is dismissed and (2) the issuance of a Notice. The chart also shows the average time elapsed between the date a Notice is issued to the date when the OPC requests a hearing before a Committee screening panel.



As this chart shows, the lengthiest period of time at the administrative case level is the period between opening a case and preparing a notice, with the average time landing at 373 days—just over a year. The average time for this stage of the OPC’s administrative cases increased by roughly twenty days from 2024. There are many factors that contribute to the length of this period, including the fact that this is the phase of the case where the OPC conducts its primary investigation, gathering the information it will rely on to prepare the Notice, present the case to a screening panel and, if needed, to pursue the case as an Action in district court. This factor alone shows it is natural for this phase of the OPC’s process to take longer than other phases.

However, because other factors also contribute to the length of this phase, the OPC may be able to focus on such factors to work toward decreasing the period in the future. For example, each OPC Disciplinary Counsel has a large case load, which at times makes it difficult to assess between which cases should be prioritized and in what order. Adding another lawyer to the OPC may help address this issue. Another contributing factor may be waiting an unnecessarily long time for respondents and complainants to provide additional information needed. At times, such information may be necessary to support the rule violations in the Notice, but at times it may be possible to proceed based on the information available and then try to strengthen the case with additional information at later phases, including through formal discovery in litigation. The risk of this approach is that the information may be insufficient to meet the OPC’s burden to establish a rule violation by a preponderance of the evidence at the screening panel stage, such that the case ends in a screening panel dismissal. Another factor is the large number of complaints received by the OPC. Although many of the complaints are not meritorious, it takes time and energy to resolve the complaints in a deliberative manner that is respectful to the complainants and satisfactory to the respondents.

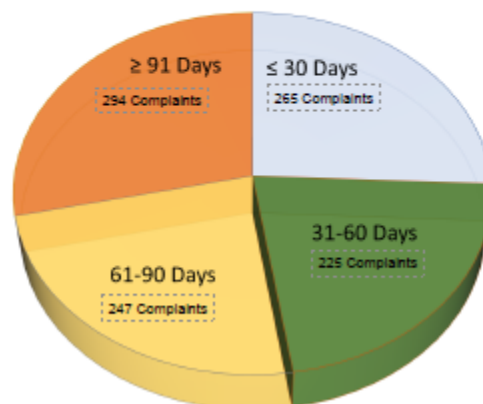
The chart below focuses only on cases opened during 2025. The chart shows the average number of days to reach the respective stages (dismissal, Notice, and request for a screening

panel hearing) before December 31, 2025. Because the chart focuses only on cases received during the year, the periods reflected are generally shorter. However, the chart confirms that the lengthiest period in the OPC’s processing time for administrative complaints is the time from when a complaint is opened to the issuance of a Notice.



The following chart reflects the number of days between the OPC’s receipt of a complaint and dismissal, based on a review of the 1031 cases opened by the OPC in 2025. Although the OPC was able to quickly dismiss roughly three-quarters of the complaints (within approximately ninety days), at least a quarter of the complaints take significantly longer to reach dismissal—even when the cases do not reach the Notice phase.

**YEAR 2025
(1031 CASES)
NUMBER OF DAYS ELAPSED BETWEEN
COMPLAINT RECEIPT DATE AND DISMISSAL DATE**



The OPC will continue to work to reduce its case processing time and decrease the delays between case phases. The OPC will also continue to develop additional ways to measure and describe its performance, including with respect to Actions.

X. Other OPC Work Performed in 2025

A. Disciplinary History Reports

In 2025, the OPC prepared 397 disciplinary history reports, as opposed to 497 in 2024.

Lawyers frequently need to obtain or provide copies of their disciplinary history reports for various purposes, including when applying for judgeships or other employment, or when seeking admission to the bar in a different jurisdiction. Although preparing these reports is not particularly complicated, completing the requests requires a substantial amount of time and effort by staff and disciplinary counsel, including searching, verifying, and compiling the disciplinary history for each lawyer involved, and then incorporating the history into a letter report.

B. Miscellaneous Inquiries

In 2025, the OPC processed and responded to 253 miscellaneous inquiries.

The OPC frequently receives correspondence from individuals that either (i) does not qualify as an ethics complaint against a lawyer for technical reasons; (ii) raises matters outside of the OPC's jurisdiction; or (iii) indicates a need for services not offered by the OPC.

In cases where the correspondence does not amount to a complaint but where it is clear the person wishes to submit a complaint, an OPC attorney and the intake paralegal review the correspondence to determine what is required to qualify the inquiry as a complaint. In most instances, all that is required is something simple, such as an unsworn declaration, identification of the attorney against whom they want to complain, the complainant's name or contact information, or some other necessary information. The intake paralegal then sends a letter informing the individual what the OPC requires to proceed with the complaint.

In cases of matters outside the OPC's jurisdiction, the intake paralegal and an OPC attorney review the inquiry and attempt to direct the inquirer to the proper place to submit their request. For example, if the individual has submitted a complaint against a sitting judge or justice, we provide instructions on how to submit a complaint with the Judicial Conduct Commission. As another example, if the individual has submitted a complaint against an unlicensed individual who appears to be practicing law, we direct the complainant to the Bar's Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee.

If it appears that the inquirer is not seeking to submit a disciplinary complaint but instead is seeking legal or other services not offered by the OPC, we attempt to direct the inquirer to appropriate resources and programs.

C. Special Prosecutor Cases

In 2025, the OPC received and processed nine special prosecutor complaints. Six such complaints were dismissed, and three remained pending at the start of 2026.

Under Rule 1-542(f), disciplinary complaints filed against lawyers employed by the OPC or the Utah State Bar, or against lawyers who are members of the Ethics and Discipline Committee or the Board of Bar Commissioners must be assigned to a special prosecutor, rather than being processed by the OPC. Upon receipt of such a complaint, the OPC compiles the file for the complaint and forwards the materials to the Committee chair, who then assigns the complaint to a screening panel chair or vice chair for review. The screening panel chair or vice chair may dismiss the complaint or, if there appear to be sufficient grounds, request the Supreme Court to appoint a “special counsel” to complete the investigation and, if needed, present the case to a “special screening panel.”

D. CLE Presentations

As part of its duties under Rule 1-521(a)(11), the OPC participates in multiple presentations on legal ethics and professionalism per year. In 2025, the OPC presented 33.5 hours of continuing legal education (“CLE”) courses. These presentations included two separate instances of the Adams C. Bevis Memorial Ethics School, which typically offers five hours of ethics CLE and one hour on professionalism and civility. The OPC also offers an annual seminar on trust accounting and law practice management. The remaining hours consisted of OPC Disciplinary Counsel presentations at programs offered by organizations and educational programs not affiliated with the OPC.

E. Service on Utah State Bar and Supreme Court Committees

The OPC regularly participates in four separate court or bar committees. Chief Disciplinary Counsel sits as a non-voting member on the Utah Supreme Court’s Advisory Committee on the Rules of Professional Conduct and on the Office of Professional Conduct Oversight Committee, which is charged with reviewing the OPC’s performance, budget, and related matters. OPC Deputy Chief Disciplinary Counsel sits as a voting member on the Utah State Bar’s Ethics Advisory Opinion Committee. In addition, an OPC Disciplinary Counsel participates on the Utah Supreme Court’s Ad Hoc Committee on Regulatory Reform.

XI. OPC Goals

The OPC’s intends to continue working to enhance efficiency, transparency, and consistency within the lawyer disciplinary system. By working to accelerate disposition times, improve statistical tracking, and improve internal policies and procedures, the OPC strives to provide a lawyer disciplinary system that inspires confidence and sets an example of the ethical practices and professionalism for those whose conduct it regulates. The OPC is grateful for the opportunity to serve the public, the legal community, and the courts.