

REPORT . . .
LAWYERS PROFESSIONAL
RESPONSIBILITY BOARD

By

Michael Hoover, Administrative Director
Minnesota Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility

Reprinted from *Bench & Bar of Minnesota* (September 1980)

The lawyer disciplinary agency for the state of Wisconsin recently surveyed seven jurisdictions, including Minnesota, concerning the number of grievances received, the agency's annual budget, and the assessment per lawyer for discipline. I recently received the results of the survey and find them sufficiently interesting to share them with the bar.

The jurisdictions surveyed, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Maryland, Illinois, Florida, and Pennsylvania, vary in size and location. The number of attorneys registered in the jurisdictions ranges from 10,000 in Maryland, to 37,500 in Illinois. Minnesota had 10,800 registered attorneys.

The number of grievances filed by the public during the last reporting year ranged from 690, in Minnesota, to 3,108, in Florida. Minnesota was not only the lowest in the number of grievances filed, but it was also lowest in grievances per lawyer. The range was .06 grievances per lawyer in Minnesota, to .17 grievances per lawyer in Michigan.

It should be noted that there may be variations among the states in how grievances are calculated. Some states may include fee disputes, which Minnesota does not, and others may include telephonic complaints, while Minnesota generally requires a written complaint. Nevertheless, it would seem safe to say that in Minnesota, the low incidence of grievances per attorney compares very favorably with the surveyed jurisdictions.

The total amount budgeted for discipline varied widely. It ranged from \$266,000 in Minnesota, to \$1,596,238 in Florida. The amount budgeted per lawyer ranged from a low of \$22.13 in Illinois, to a high of \$61.48 in Florida. Minnesota budgeted \$24.63 per lawyer. It thus appears that Minnesota's disciplinary budget is near the low end of the range for the surveyed jurisdictions.

A table showing comparative statistics for the surveyed jurisdictions follows:

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>No. of Grievances</u>	<u>Grievances per Lawyer</u>	<u>Per Lawyer Budget for Discipline</u>
Wisconsin	1,457	.14	\$27.76

Minnesota	690	.06	24.63
Michigan	2,995	.17	23.46
Maryland	959	.10	37.20
Illinois	2,500	.07	22.13
Florida	3,108	.12	61.48
Pennsylvania	2,007	.09	40.13

I am sure that most lawyers are aware that the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board is funded by a portion of the registration fee annually paid to the Supreme Court by all attorneys. Thirty-three dollars of the \$45.00 which is paid annually by most of the active attorneys is budgeted for the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board. Five of the six surveyed jurisdictions, other than Minnesota, are also funded by a portion of the license renewal fee. The assessment per lawyer ranges from \$30.00 in Illinois, to \$61.75 in Florida. The others, in ascending order, are: Wisconsin (\$33.50), Maryland (\$40.00), and Pennsylvania (\$45.00).

The survey results indicate that despite the growing volume of complaints in Minnesota, the incidence per lawyer is still relatively low. The per lawyer assessment for discipline and actual expenditures by the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board also appear to be relatively low compared to the other jurisdictions included in the survey.