



# NEW HAMPSHIRE LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

annual report  
2024-2025

prepared by  
Jill O'Neill and Dakotah Thunder Wilson

# Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Members of the New Hampshire Legal Community,

Every day, legal professionals carry the weight of other people's most difficult moments. Lawyers, judges, law students, and legal staff are often expected to be steady, prepared, responsive, and strong, even when their own lives feel uncertain or strained. At the New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program, we see the person behind the professional role. We know that asking for help can feel difficult, especially in a profession built on competence, confidentiality, judgment, and service to others.

This year, more members of New Hampshire's legal community reached out to NHLAP for support. We have seen increases across referral categories, and we are especially encouraged by the growth in word-of-mouth referrals. When someone who once received support feels safe enough to encourage a colleague, friend, classmate, or family member to call NHLAP, it tells us something important: trust is growing, stigma is weakening, and the message is reaching people that they do not have to struggle alone.

That trust matters. Many people contact NHLAP at a moment when they are worried about their work, their health, their reputation, their license, their family, or their future. Some are navigating anxiety, depression, burnout, substance use, grief, trauma, medical concerns, career transition, or the stress of law school and bar admission. Others are not sure what they need yet; they only know that something has become harder to manage. Our role is to meet people in that moment with care, discretion, and practical support.

As demand has grown, NHLAP has worked carefully and intentionally to strengthen its capacity. With support for our strategic goals, we expanded our team to better serve the legal community. The addition of clinical consultation and care navigation allows NHLAP to provide more individualized support, assist with workplace and personal concerns, connect individuals with vetted treatment professionals, and help people take the next step into appropriate care. These services are not one-size-fits-all. They are grounded in listening, understanding, and helping each person identify what support looks like for them.

We also expanded our innovation, outreach, and project coordination capacity. This work supports NHLAP's broader strategic initiatives, including improved communication, a redesigned website, more accessible wellness resources, anti-stigma education, and programming designed specifically for legal professionals. The goal is simple: when someone is ready to look for help, the path should be clear, credible, and easy to find.

Peer support remains one of the most meaningful parts of NHLAP's work. There is real value in speaking with another legal professional who understands the pressures of practice, the fear of being judged, and the challenge of balancing professional responsibility with personal recovery or well-being. Peer connection helps reduce isolation and reminds people that recovery, healing, and professional success can coexist.

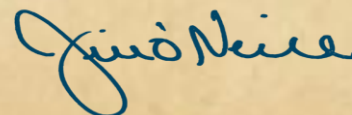
I am deeply grateful for the people who make this work possible. Our staff, Commission members, volunteers, peer supporters, treatment partners, legal employers, law school partners, and members of the bench and bar each play a role in building a healthier legal community. NHLAP's growth is not simply about adding staff or expanding services. It is about building a culture where help-seeking is understood as responsible, courageous, and consistent with the values of the profession.

Looking ahead, NHLAP will continue to focus on what legal professionals need most: confidential access, timely response, practical guidance, trusted referrals, peer connection, education, and support that recognizes the realities of legal work. We will continue to listen to the profession, respond to emerging needs, and create spaces where lawyers, judges, law students, and legal professionals can speak honestly about the pressures they face.

To every person who reached out this year, referred someone to NHLAP, attended a program, served as a peer volunteer, or helped reduce stigma through an honest conversation: thank you. Your courage and trust strengthen this work. You help make it possible for others to reach out sooner, before challenges become crises.

If you or someone you know may benefit from support, please contact NHLAP. You do not need to wait until things become unmanageable. You do not need to know exactly what to ask for. You only need to start the conversation. We are here, confidentially and without judgment.

With gratitude,



Jill O'Neill Executive Director New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program

## Commission (Board) Updates

NHLAP thanks **Kevin O'Shea** for his service as he takes the next step on his professional journey.



And welcomes **Melissa St. Cyr** to the NHLAP commission. We are thrilled to have her on board!

We also wish to express our continuing gratitude to our other commission members. For a complete list, visit <https://www.lapnh.org/commission.htm>

## Mark Durso is hired

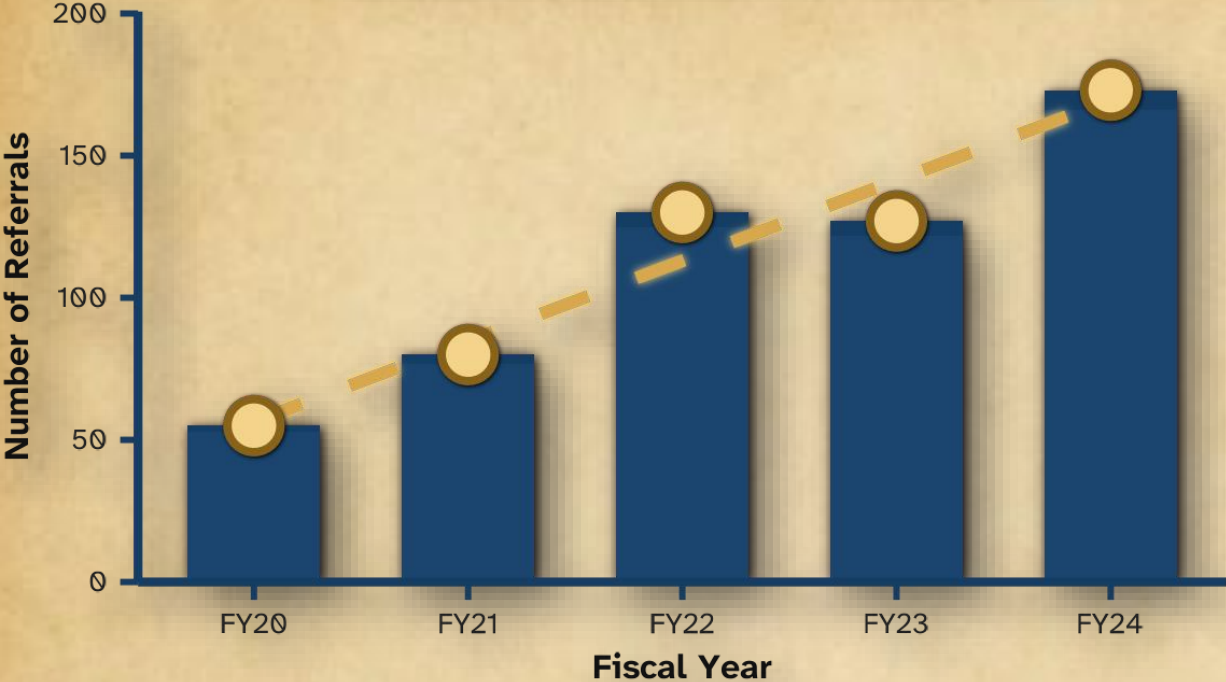
**Mark Durso** has spent much of his career working with those struggling with severe mental health and substance use disorders that are dually involved within the legal system. On the day to day, Mark works with both micro, mezzo, and macro systems to promote advocacy, support, connection, education, and trainings to increase all areas of wellness. Mark also enjoys learning about new clinical intervention initiatives and providing education on mental health and other co-occurring and psychosocial issues.

Mark has his Master of Science in Justice Studies and Masters of Science in Social Work and has spent over ten years working with treatment courts, individuals, families, and children with mental health and substance use disorders. Mark has dedicated time researching new treatment interventions, the impact of trauma, attachment, and intergenerational family dynamics. Mark has not only facilitated but developed treatment groups for those involved within the criminal justice system as well as recently curated both a Lawyer Wellness and Older Adult peer group for legal practitioners who may need additional support, connections, and resources



# Evolution of NHLAP

### Individual Referrals by Fiscal Year



Fiscal Year	Clients Served
FY20	55
FY21	80
FY22	130
FY23	127
FY24	173

### Demand is Clearly Rising:

- FY21 to FY22 = 62% increase in call volume
- FY22 to FY23 = 46% increase in call volume
- FY23 to FY24 = 33% increase in call volume

# Participant Satisfaction Surveys

NHLAP has officially begun to track annual satisfaction and administering evaluations for educational programs delivered.

The results are IN and they show...

**Service quality is strong and improving!**

- 80% of participants strongly agreed and the remaining 20% agreed that their needs were met
- 80% were highly satisfied with the providers/resources referred to them by NHLAP and the remaining 20% were satisfied
- 100% felt strongly that their confidentiality and privacy were protected during interactions with NHLAP
- 100% would feel comfortable recommending NHLAP's services to another attorney, judge, or law student

## Participant Testimonials

*"I was skeptical about the confidentiality aspects of reaching out to NHLAP. However, I was at a point where help was needed no matter the repercussions. There were no repercussions. NHLAP is fantastic and protective and I have nothing but fantastic things to say. I have referred others and helped them understand the complete confidential nature of the referral."*

*"As a solo practitioner, I was surprised to hear there may be a greater number of colleagues in situations similar to my own."*

*"Jill and Mark, where would I be without them? They have developed me into who I am today, and I'm very comfortable addressing all matters professionally. Still, I also understand that I am not the issue because I've worked on myself, and they have taught me the skills I need to succeed in the legal field. Without Jill and Mark, I would not be where I am today. They are both also quick to call me when I am wrong, and initially, I felt ganged up on, but then I realized what they were trying to say, and I have learned how to improve my actions, behavior, and intentions when dealing with certain people in the profession. What a fantastic team, and I will refer them any day, time, or place."*

## Evolution of NHLAP, 5-Year Transformation

**\*\*2021 – 2022:\*\***

During this pivotal period, the NHLAP successfully balanced its budget and established a reserve account, laying a strong financial foundation for the future. Through proactive outreach efforts, we saw a remarkable doubling in referrals from legal professionals seeking our support, highlighting the growing recognition of our vital services.

**\*\*2022:\*\***

We embraced innovation by bringing in a skilled consultant to lead our first-ever strategic visioning and planning initiative. By conducting 12 virtual focus groups with key legal stakeholders, we ensured that our three-year strategic plan was shaped by the insights and needs of the community we serve.

**\*\*2022 – 2023:\*\***

We took bold steps to secure the program's future by drafting and successfully pitching funding proposals, which included a much-needed \$10 increase in the LAP Assessment Fee. This fee, now integrated into the bar's annual membership dues, is the first adjustment since 2013, reflecting our commitment to continually enhance our services. Additionally, we secured \$200,000 from the MCLE Committee to hire a project coordinator dedicated to launching our ambitious strategic initiatives.

## Evolution of NHLAP, 5-Year Transformation Continued

**\*\*2023 – 2024:\*\***

With the addition of a project coordinator and a team clinician, we significantly enhanced our program offerings and outreach efforts. The project coordinator is currently leading a comprehensive redesign of the NHLAP website, transforming it into a user-friendly online resource center for legal professionals, ensuring that help is just a few clicks away.

**\*\*2024 – 2025:\*\***

Our commitment to serving the legal community is stronger than ever. We have expanded our Peer Group Programming and broadened our referrals engaging judges, magistrates, and legal employers, resulting in an unprecedented increase in word-of-mouth referrals. We are experiencing the highest volume of program referrals since our inception, alongside a record number of requests for NHLAP presentations and Wellness CLEs. We are also actively pursuing fundraising initiatives, including the creation of a Donor Match Fundraiser for law firms and legal employers. Furthermore, we are collaborating with volunteers from Taproot to develop impactful marketing materials for distribution to courthouses and law firms, amplifying our reach and support within the community.

# Services and Programs Highlights

## Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers

This meeting is for lawyers, judges, and law students in or seeking recovery from unhealthy substance use and coping behaviors - and is always confidential.

## Life After Law (NEW!)

A group hosted by the New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program that discusses practical issues and healthy living to succeed in retirement.

## Lawyer Mental Health Group (NEW!)

This confidential group is exclusively for New Hampshire lawyers looking for additional peer-led support, guidance, consultation, and tools to explore current stressors and mental health challenges.

## “How We Help”

Launched a marketing campaign to better engage members of the NH legal community and clarify who we serve and the issues we can assist with.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
\*CONTACT US FOR FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, CARING SERVICE

**WHO WE HELP**

- Judges**: Offering private, confidential assistance for state and federal judges and magistrates.
- Lawyers**: Understanding the unique pressures lawyers face and offering reliable, proven solutions and guidance.
- Law Students & Bar Applicants**: Providing assistance with character and fitness issues and the stressful demands of law school.
- Families**: Offering assistance for lawyers with impaired family members or family members of impaired lawyers.
- Legal Employers**: Assisting employers by developing compassionate and appropriate strategies to assist employees.

**HOW WE HELP**

- Mental Health Support**
- Peer Support**
- Employer Support**
- Addiction Recovery Support**
- Practice Management Resources**
- Issues Impacting Bar Membership**
- Career and Life Transitions**
- Wellness Groups**  
Support & Networking\*

NHLAP Services: Jill O'Neill at [Jill@lapnh.org](mailto:Jill@lapnh.org) &/or call: (603) 491 - 0282 \*Info. on Wellness Groups: Mark Durso at [Mark@lapnh.org](mailto:Mark@lapnh.org)

Disclaimer and Confidentiality: Support groups are intended to motivate, educate, and support community through shared lived experiences, not provide therapy or treatment. The NH Supreme Court establishes NHLAP as a privileged and confidential lawyers assistance program exempt from reporting misconduct or ethics violations (ABA Rule 8.3(c); NH Supreme Court Rules 37(e), 58).

[www.lapnh.org](http://www.lapnh.org)

“How We Help” marketing campaign; prepared by volunteer graphic designer Alesha Causey ([aleshadesigns.com](http://aleshadesigns.com))

# Recovering Daniel Webster



## 3/7/2025 - Recovering Daniel Webster

📄 Course Number: OT192o

📅 Original Program Date: Mar 07, 2025

🕒 Duration: 4 hours 51 minutes

📄 Credits: 45 NH Ethics Minutes, 300 NHCLE Minutes

📄 Passport: This product is Passport Eligible

📄 Practice Area: Other/Misc., NH Practice, Wellness Programs

▶ View Demo

Attorney Kent Barker produced a first-of-its-kind CLE called “Recovering Daniel Webster”, examining the life and career of Webster and featuring live, dramatic reenactments of Daniel’s famous speeches (performed by Attorney Tom Burack, pictured). NHLAP was asked to co-produce to discuss the effects of grief, trauma, and alcohol use disorder on Webster’s professionalism and decision-making ability.

This CLE featured a panel comprised of legal and historical experts. NHLAP would like to formally thank and recognize Kent Barker (Hamblett & Kerrigan), Dr. Joel Richard Paul (University of California Hastings College of the Law) Judge Jacalyn Colburn (Hillsborough Superior Court), Professor John Greabe (UNH Franklin Pierce School of Law), Tom Burack (Sheehan Phinney), and Jill O’Neill (New Hampshire Lawyers Assistance Program).

### Testimonials from this program include:

- *It was inspirational, which is needed in the current climate.*
- *I think the broader perspective that this course targets is something that CLEs should particularly be adapted towards.*
- *Very relevant.*
- *The structure of the CLE itself was well thought-out. The changes in specific topics, the addition of dramatized speeches, and transitioning to various segments made this a very entertaining CLE as well.*

# New Development Operations

## NH Gives

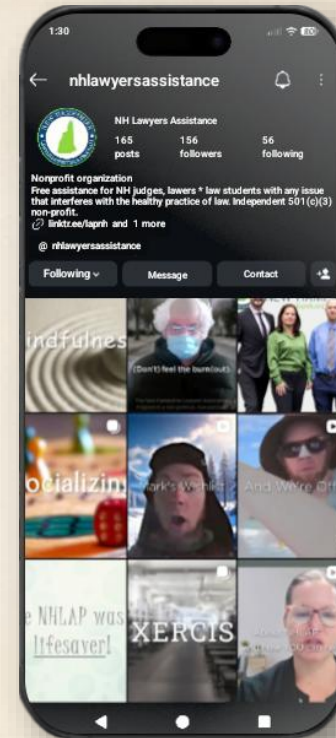
As a pilot for new fundraising strategies and initiatives, NHLAP participated in NH Gives, a 24-hour day of giving, and raised \$1,900. Thank you to all of our generous donors!

## Juris Education

Jill and Mark responded to request for a written interview with Juris Education about mental health challenges for law students and early-career lawyers.

## Legal Mindset Corner

Jill and Dakotah sat down for the recording of a podcast with Becky Howlett and Cynthia Sharp of the Legal Mindset Corner to talk about eliminating barriers to help and Dakotah and Cynthia's shared love of the Philadelphia Eagles.



# Financial Overview

## Summary Overview:

NHLAP ended the fiscal year in a positive financial position. Total income was modestly below budget, while total expenses were significantly below budget. As a result, the Program reported net income of \$4,111.12, compared with a budgeted deficit of \$20,770.00.

Metric	Actual	Budget	Variance
Total Income	\$305,980.65	\$309,400	\$ 3,419.35 under budget
Total Expenses	\$301,869.53	\$330,170	\$28,300.47 under budget
Net Income	\$ 4,111.12	\$-20,770	\$24,881.12 favorable

## Carry-over Funds and Budget Structure

**FY23 carry-over funds totaled \$234,237.** These funds included remaining Year 2 MCLE funds, unspent FY23 clinician funds, and the prior year net profit margin.

**The FY24 budget was organized into three distinct components:** the main operating budget, including Executive Director compensation; the Clinician budget; and the Project Coordinator budget. Funds were allocated to support each position and related program operations.

## Funding Structure:

NHLAP is funded through the Lawyers Assistance Program assessment, which is collected as part of annual New Hampshire Bar Association membership dues. Under Supreme Court Rule 58 and the Court's general superintendence authority, dues-paying members are assessed for the purpose of funding the Lawyers Assistance Program.

Membership Category	LAP Assessment
Active over three years	\$30
Judicial	\$30
Part-time Judicial	\$30
Active three years and under	\$30
Inactive	\$30
Inactive Retired	\$15
Pro bono Active	\$0

# Revenue-Expense Analysis

## Revenue

Total income was \$305,980.65, or 98.9% of budget. Core revenue sources were NHBA income and MCLE funds. Additional late dues collections and donations strengthened available resources for the following fiscal year.

Revenue Source	Amount
NHBA Income	\$228,985.00
MCLE Funds	\$ 75,000.00
Donations	\$ 1,869.10
Interest Earned	\$ 126.55
Additional late dues collected for FY25	\$ 6,740.00
Additional donations allocated to FY25	\$ 1,900.00

## Expenses

Total expenses were \$301,869.53, which was \$28,300.47 under budget. Employee compensation remained the largest expense category and was closely aligned with budget. Payroll taxes and processing fees were also slightly under budget.

Expense Category	Actual	Budget	Variance
Employee Compensation	\$228,307.08	\$230,000	\$ 1,692.92 under budget
Payroll taxes and processing fees	\$ 18,930.89	\$ 19,900	\$ 969.11 under budget
Total expenses	\$301,869.53	\$330,170	\$28,300.47 under budget

## Budget Variance Highlights

- Expenses were significantly below budget in programming, office supplies, 401(k) employer contributions, computer expense and maintenance, and training.
- These savings more than offset the modest revenue shortfall and produced a favorable net income variance of \$24,881.12.
- Areas above budget included secure database costs, website upgrade expenses, advertising, and selected accounting and software costs.

# Thanks to our Community Partners

As part of new and ongoing community outreach efforts, we have had the pleasure to work with many professionals in and outside the legal profession. There are too many to list, but we want to specifically thank the following individuals and organizations who we have worked closely with this year:

- Attorney Chris Hawkins, DTC Lawyers
- Attorney Katie Mosher, DTC Lawyers
- Russ Hilliard, DTC Lawyers
- Current and past justices of the New Hampshire Supreme Court
- Staff of the New Hampshire Attorney Discipline Office
- Current and past members of the New Hampshire Bar Counsel
- Current and past staff of the New Hampshire Bar Association
- Current and past members of the New Hampshire Bar Association Special Committee on Attorney Wellness
- Myles Matteson, Legal Counsel at the Office of the Governor of New Hampshire
- Faculty of the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law
- Faculty of the New Hampshire Public Defender Program
- Faculty of the New Hampshire Trial Lawyers Association
- Faculty of the New Hampshire Association of Justice
- Members of the Daniel Webster-Batchelder American Inn of Court
- Members of the Charles C Doe Inn of Court
- Members of the New Hampshire Women's Bar Association
- Attorneys and support staff of Shaheen and Gordon
- Attorneys and support staff of Rath, Young, and Pignatelli
- Attorneys and support staff of McLane Middleton
- Rebecca Sanborn, Sanborn Solutions
- Penelope Perri, Penelope Perri Coaching
- Laurel Bovin, Flux and Flow Professional Coaching
- Becky Howlett and Cynthia Sharp, Legal Mindset Corner
- Publication staff of Legal Mindset Corner
- Alesha Causey, Alesha Designs
- And all treatment providers, treatment programs, and other professionals who have offered compassionate and supportive care to participants of NHLAP programs



**NHLAP**  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
[www.lapnh.org](http://www.lapnh.org)

## About Us

Under Supreme Court Rule 58, all contact with NHLAP, whether with lawyers, judges, law students, or concerned third parties, is confidential. We are here to help with any issue that may be negatively impacting the ability to practice. We have helped hundreds of New Hampshire lawyers address and overcome challenges to engage successfully in their professional and personal lives. As a confidential program, no information gained through NHLAP work is ever shared unless we are asked to do so by the affected person. In addition, NHLAP employees and volunteers are exempt from reporting professional misconduct under Rule 8.3, and prohibited from doing so under Rule 37. All interaction is strictly confidential.

## Contact NHLAP

**Email:** [jill@lapnh.org](mailto:jill@lapnh.org)

**Phone:** (603)491-0282

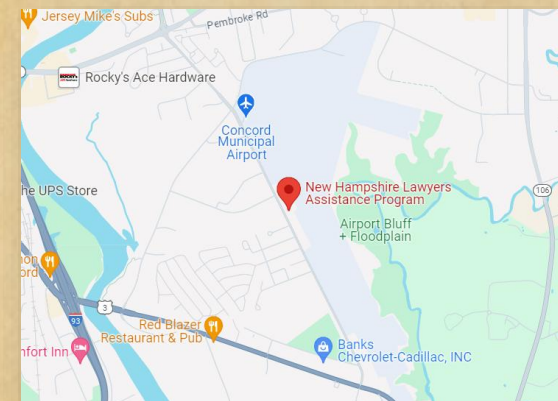
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## Visit our office



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