



# Final Report

Commission on Indiana's Legal Future

JULY 1, 2025

“I SAY ‘TRY’; IF WE NEVER TRY, WE SHALL NEVER SUCCEED.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
OCTOBER 13, 1862

---

# Introduction

Indiana's attorney shortage adversely affects access to justice, economic and workforce development, and the civic health of our communities. Where it involves shortages of prosecutors and public defenders, it is a public safety crisis. It does not reflect a single problem, and it defies a single-answer resolution.

One thing is clear: the answer is not as simple as "more lawyers." Instead, this challenge needs a complete reevaluation of how legal services are provided in Indiana. It requires reimagining who provides those services and how we get them to areas and fields where they aren't today. Each potential solution will present its own unique challenges and sources of both resistance and acceptance.

The hard work of this Commission is just the latest in a series of endeavors aiming to make Indiana's legal system more accessible and careers in Indiana's legal profession more attainable. From the rethinking of case management pathways and other innovative efficiency projects to the adoption of the Uniform Bar Exam and opening the doors for graduates of online law schools to sit for Indiana's bar exam, the members of this Commission are in many ways carrying on the efforts of others. And others will, we're sure, continue to build on the efforts detailed in this report.

They must. Because as a legal profession, we cannot remain complacent. As sure as "more lawyers" is not the answer, "do nothing" is likewise an unacceptable response to this problem. We must instead commit our energy to fully understanding the risks and benefits of these new ideas. We cannot cast off one as too small or write off another as too large. And we must come to grips with the idea that, in many ways, "the way we've always done it" is what got us to this point—and it won't get us out.

It has been an honor to be entrusted with co-chairing this endeavor. We cannot adequately express our gratitude for the incredible work of everyone who participated.



Nancy H. Vaidik  
Indiana Court of Appeals

Justin P. Forkner  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Indiana Supreme Court

---

# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Contents .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. The Commission .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>II. Indiana’s Attorney Shortage .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>III. Updates on Interim Recommendations .....</b>	<b>10</b>
a. Completed Interim Recommendations .....	10
b. In-Progress Interim Recommendations .....	12
c. Held or Denied Interim Recommendations.....	15
<b>IV. Additional Recommendations .....</b>	<b>17</b>
a. Provide for Ongoing Oversight and Management of Legal Futures Initiatives.....	17
b. Funding for Scholarships .....	18
c. Public Service Pathway Pilot .....	19
d. Public Service Loan Repayment Assistance .....	21
e. Implement Advanced Courtroom Technologies.....	21
f. Support the Growth of Legal Education .....	22
g. Amend Small Claims Limits & Procedural Rules.....	23
h. Regionalize Judicial and Bar Association Resources .....	25
i. Advise Practitioners on Alternative Fee Structures.....	26
j. Create and Support Undergraduate-Law School Pipelines.....	27
k. Implement Document Automation Tools and MyCase Improvements .....	28
l. Informational Videos to Aid Litigants.....	29
m. Study Use of Clerk Staff .....	30
n. Mentorships .....	30

o. Centralize Public Service Job Availability .....	31
---	----

## **V. What's Next.....32**

a. Would-be Indiana lawyers need greater access to legal education institutions.....	32
b. Promote the value of practicing law in Indiana.....	33
c. Curb student loan debt.....	33
d. Continued success requires continuing funding .....	34

## **Commission Members .....35**

Business & Licensure Models Work Group .....	37
Pathways to Admission & Education Work Group .....	38
Incentivizing Rural Practice Work Group .....	39
Incentivizing Public Service Work Group .....	40
Technology Applications Work Group.....	41

## **Appendix – Public Service Pathway Pilot for Law Licensure in Indiana .....42**

---

# I. The Commission

On April 4, 2024, following a convening of stakeholders from across the legal profession, the Indiana Supreme Court created [the Commission on Indiana's Legal Future](#) and charged it with exploring options for addressing Indiana's attorney shortage and presenting findings and recommendations to the Court for future actions. The Court directed an initial round of recommendations, those involving legislative changes or funding requests, to be completed by August 1, 2024, with the Commission's final report due on July 1, 2025.

The Court established five work groups within the Commission, each tasked with specific responsibilities:

- **Business & Licensure Models.** Recommend improvements to the current law firm business model and professional regulations to meet the needs of modern and future practice.
- **Pathways to Admission & Education.** Recommend models for alternative pathways to legal practice in Indiana and for streamlining connections between secondary, undergraduate, and law school institutions.
- **Incentivizing Rural Practice.** Recommend ways to connect law students, practitioners, and other legal professionals to opportunities in rural communities.
- **Incentivizing Public Service.** Recommend ways to promote interest in public service legal work, such as criminal justice, family services, civil legal aid, and government.
- **Technology Applications.** Recommend ways to safely and ethically utilize emerging technologies to fill gaps in legal representation.

The Commission met on June 17 and July 24, 2024, and submitted [its report of interim recommendations](#) to the Court on July 30. The Court posted the report for public comment and, on October 3, [issued an order](#) addressing the 27 interim recommendations and providing additional guidance to the Commission.

The Commission met again on October 29, March 27, 2025, May 28, and June 16, to continue its work and produce this report. The five work groups met consistently throughout the Commission's timeline, doing the heavy lifting and thoughtful analysis that has resulted in all the Commission's recommendations.

---

## II. Indiana's Attorney Shortage

The urgency of completing the Commission's Interim Recommendations Report by July 30, 2024, meant it could not contain a discussion of Indiana's attorney shortage. Through the messaging of the Commission members and others, the story of that shortage has been widely told. That said, for historical purposes, there is value in including a summary here.

[According to the ABA](#), as of 2024 Indiana ranked 43rd out of the 50 states in terms of lawyers per capita—at 2.26 lawyers per 1,000 residents. So, while “more lawyers” aren't the panacea, this would certainly help. To be sure, if enough Indiana lawyers were doing the work needed by those unable to afford competent representation, the legal services shortage would likely not exist. The lack of lawyers, though, reflects the overlap of three issues: the age of Indiana's attorneys; where those attorneys are located; and Indiana's attorney production pipeline.

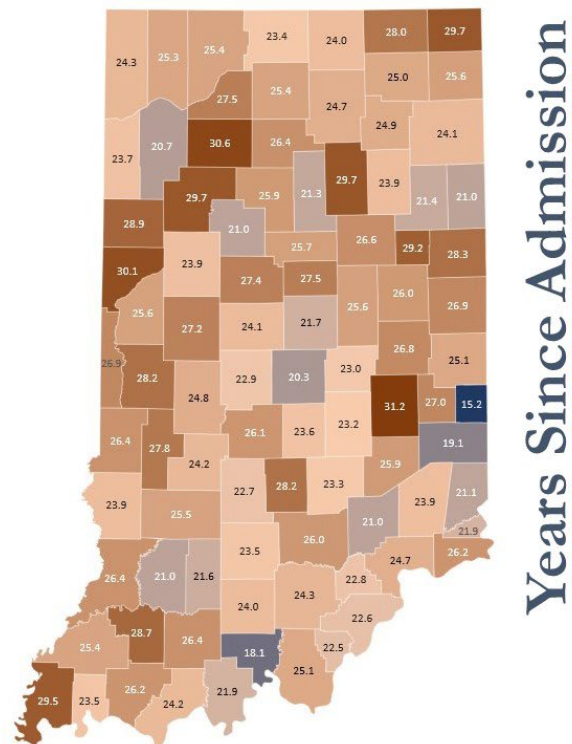
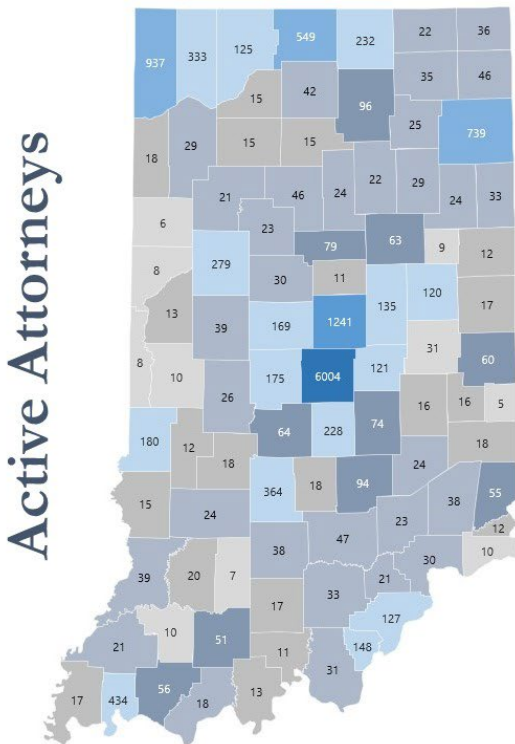
As for the first two problems, the overlap is easy to see. In short, where we have fewer attorneys in our state, those attorneys trend older. And that's most evident in our rural counties, where lawyers are retiring with fewer younger lawyers coming in to replace them.

- **Attorney Age:** To track an attorney's “age,” the Office of Judicial Administration uses their date of admission to the bar as a proxy. Most lawyers attend law school directly after college, making a newly admitted lawyer about 25 years old.

In 2024, the average years past admission was 22.4 years, making the average age of an Indiana attorney roughly 47 years old. But that average age is much higher—well over 25 years past admission—for lawyers in Indiana's rural counties.

- **Attorney Locations:** To determine where Indiana's attorneys are located, OJA uses their registered business address. Including judicial officers, there are roughly 19,000 active, Indiana-licensed attorneys. When that number is reduced by lawyers who maintain active licenses but are based out of state, it is closer to 16,000 practicing attorneys in the state.

## Active Attorneys



- ## Years Since Admission

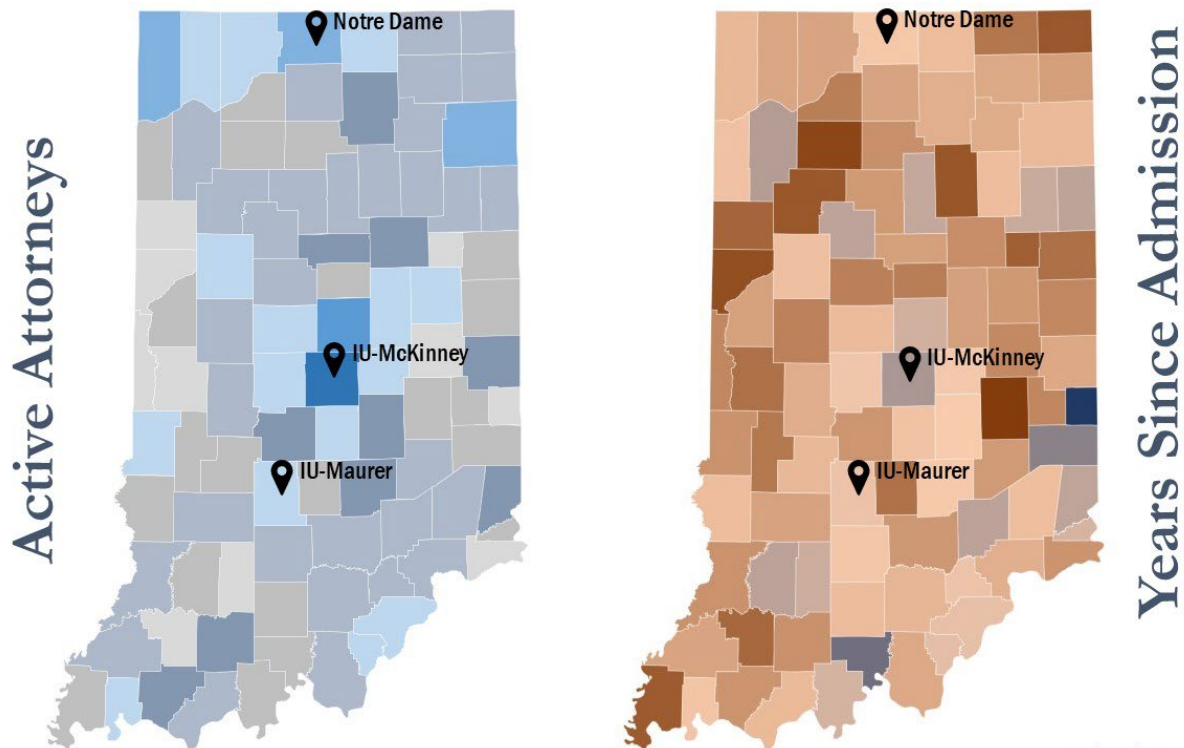
By contrast, Notre Dame has roughly 180 students in each graduating class, but only a handful are Indiana residents and only about 8% take Indiana's July bar



exam. IU Maurer graduates around 170 students each year with roughly half of them being Indiana residents, but only around 38% of those graduates sit for the exam. As for IU McKinney, the graduating class is generally around 225–245 students with roughly 80% of those students being Indiana residents and 74% sitting for the exam.

So, although Indiana still has three law schools, only IU McKinney predominantly enrolls Indiana residents and sees most of its graduates take the Indiana bar exam. It also has the only evening program and the only hybrid online program.

The closure of two law schools and the above statistics lead to the confluence of Indiana's three problems: in areas with fewer and older active lawyers, residents face not only an access-to-justice problem but also an access-to-law-school problem. These areas aren't just legal deserts; they're also law school deserts.



And the problem is not limited to those counties that either qualify as legal deserts or are classified as rural. Even Indiana's more populous urban counties, like Lake County, are suffering from a dire shortage of lawyers. And within Marion County, where a high number of lawyers work for public or government agencies, there are certainly smaller communities whose residents lack access to meaningful legal services.

---

## III. Updates on Interim Recommendations

The Commission's July 30, 2024 Report contained 27 interim recommendations. Through the hard work of the Commission members, work group members, OJA staff and committees, and with the support of the Court, legislative partners, and countless other stakeholders, many of these recommendations have been implemented or are in progress.

### a. Completed Interim Recommendations

#### I.c. Launching a Regulatory Sandbox Program

This recommendation proposed creating a program, like Utah's pioneering Office of Legal Services Innovation, to allow legal entities to propose non-traditional legal services models as pilot programs. The Court directed its Innovation Committee to develop parameters for this program and serve as the supervising body for these pilots. The Court approved the Innovation Committee's parameters on March 12, 2025. The regulatory reform pilot project is posted on [the Innovation Committee's website](#).

#### I.i. Funding for State Court Technology

This recommendation proposed additional funding for the Court's technology efforts. The Court received additional technology funding for the next biennial budget, although it is focused on an ongoing jail management project. Yet the additional funding allows greater flexibility for the Indiana Office of Court Technology to continue its efforts to modernize courts and broaden access to justice through emerging technologies.

#### II.b. Amend IC § 36-4-9-11

This recommendation proposed amending the statutory provision that required the head of certain cities' departments of law to be residents of the county where their city is located. This residency requirement made it challenging for cities in rural counties to find competent representation on municipal matters. The recommendation proposed expanding eligibility to residents of contiguous counties. [Senate Bill 524](#) made this change and was signed into law by the Governor on April 9, 2025.

### III.a. Amend Alternative Dispute Resolution Rule 1.4

This recommendation proposed allowing the Alternative Dispute Resolution rules to apply “in all small claims proceedings where not prohibited by law or contrary to informal and speedy dispensing of justice.” The Court posted the recommendation for public comment and, on December 19, 2024, issued an [order amending Small Claims Rule 8\(A\)](#) to allow courts to order ADR in small claims proceedings when not prohibited by law, consistent with the informal and speedy dispensing of justice, agreed to by the parties, and provided at no cost to them.

### III.b. Amend Small Claims Rule 8

This recommendation proposed allowing business entities in small claims cases to be represented by owners or properly designated representatives up to the full statutory jurisdictional limit. The Court posted the recommendation for public comment and, on December 19, 2024, issued an [order amending Small Claims Rule 8\(C\)](#) to make this change.

### III.e. Amend Admission & Discipline Rule 6

This recommendation proposed eliminating the requirement that an out-of-state lawyer applying for an Indiana license be licensed in a state with a reciprocal licensing status no less restrictive than Indiana’s. On October 3, 2024, the Court issued an [order amending Admission and Discipline Rule 6\(c\)](#) to make this change.

### III.f. Define Areas of High Legal Need

This recommendation proposed a new Admission and Discipline Rule to create a uniform definition for areas of legal need. The proposal included definitions of rural counties, legal deserts, and a category of “underserved communities” that encompassed areas of the state that lacked legal coverage—regardless of whether the area was rural or the county as a whole qualified as a legal desert. On October 3, 2024, the Court issued an [order creating Admission and Discipline Rule 1.2](#) to make this change. Maps showing Indiana’s rural counties and those counties that qualify as legal deserts are now posted on [the Commission’s website](#).

### III.i. Amend Judicial Conduct Rule 2.17

This recommendation proposed adding commentary to Rule 2.17 of Indiana’s Code of Judicial Conduct—which obligates judges, with exceptions, to prohibit broadcasting from

their courtrooms—that protected a judge who allows electronic devices in their courtroom even if those devices are used surreptitiously to broadcast proceedings. After review by the Court’s Office of Judicial and Attorney Regulation, the Court approved a comment to Rule 2.17 to further this goal.

### **III.k. Facilitate Liability Insurance for Lawyers Providing Pro Bono Services**

This recommendation requested the Court to direct its staff or the Coalition for Court Access to work with legal aid providers to facilitate professional liability coverage for lawyers taking pro bono cases. Because such coverage already existed for many legal aid providers, the Coalition for Court Access, with the strong participation of its legal aid provider membership, assumed responsibility for advertising this existing capability.

## **b. In-Progress Interim Recommendations**

### **I.a. Legal Practice Startup Subsidy**

This recommendation proposed funding a startup grant to assist lawyers seeking to open a law firm in an area of high legal need. The proposal suggested funding assistance for legal research products, facilities cost, and practice management resources. The Commission approved the Rural Practice Work Group’s final program parameters on March 27, 2025, and the Court approved the proposal on April 22, 2025. We expect that this program will go live in the summer of 2025.

### **I.b. Public Interest Scholarship Program**

This recommendation proposed a scholarship program, under the auspices of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, for incoming law students who commit to serving as public defenders or deputy prosecutors. The scholarship would obligate the students to a period of years of service in Indiana and include an Indiana-focused program of legal education. The scholarship program was introduced in the 2025 legislative session as [House Bill 1049](#), and it had strong support from the Indiana State Bar Association, the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council, the Indiana Public Defender Council, the Indiana Bar Foundation, and the Commission on Court-Appointed Attorneys. Though HB 1049 passed the House, it did not pass the Senate. The statutory language, however, was incorporated into [House Bill 1515](#) and was signed into law by the Governor on May 6, 2025.

But no funding was appropriated for the program in the next biennial budget. Alternative funding avenues are still being pursued. Section IV.b. of this report proposes a few ideas.

### **I.d. Fund Non-Profit Model Startup Costs**

This recommendation proposed funding a startup grant to allow organizations to launch non-profit law firms that use lower-cost legal service providers like law students or allied legal professionals. These law firms would help address the modest means access to justice problem where individuals might have too much income to qualify for civil legal aid but insufficient income to hire a traditional attorney. The Court directed its Innovation Committee, through the regulatory sandbox parameters, to create an avenue for organizations to apply for a pilot grant establishing a non-profit law firm. The regulatory reform pilot project posted on [the Innovation Committee's website](#) incorporates this concept.

### **I.e. Encourage the Establishment of a Statewide Legal Incubator Program**

This recommendation proposed creating a program to teach new lawyers the skills necessary to be small business owners, create a peer support network, and partner law students and new lawyers with mentor attorneys. [The Indiana State Bar Association's Attorney Shortage Plan](#), adopted in February 2025, includes strategies aimed at developing an incubator cohort, creating resource hubs, and advancing other goals that support the legal incubator model. The Commission is encouraged by ISBA's strong engagement and leadership on this topic.

### **I.f. Provide Student Loan Help for Practitioners in Legal Deserts**

This recommendation, a corollary to the legal startup subsidy, proposed creating a student loan repayment assistance program for law school graduates practicing in areas of high legal need. The Commission approved the Rural Practice Work Group's final program parameters on March 27, 2025, and the Court approved the proposal on April 22, 2025. We expect that this program will go live in the summer of 2025.

## **I.h. Rural Community Development Matching Grants**

This recommendation proposed community-based grants and other efforts to ensure that new lawyers moving into legal deserts were moving into adequate business environments—tax incentives, office infrastructure, broadband access, etc. The Rural Practice Work Group, in developing its startup subsidy proposal, has been collaborating with the Indiana Economic Development Council and the Indiana Small Business Development Center to connect those resources to recipients of the startup subsidy funds.

## **I.j. Funding to Improve Local Technology**

This recommendation proposed grants from the Court to trial courts to fund technological needs and suggested collaboration with Executive Branch efforts to expand broadband access statewide. It is not clear yet if the Court will have sufficient funds to provide these grant opportunities in the current fiscal climate. Additionally, the Indiana Broadband Office’s participation in the Federal Digital Opportunity Grant—a potential funding source—has been halted due to suspension of the program by the federal government.

## **I.k. Funding for Technology in Detention Facilities**

Similar to Interim Recommendation I.j., this recommendation proposed grants from the Court, in partnership with the Indiana Sheriffs’ Association, to facilitate the deployment of remote-appearance technologies in local jails. For the same concerns identified above, it is not clear yet if the Court will have sufficient funds to provide these grant opportunities in the current fiscal climate.

## **I.l. Funding for Dual Enrollment Courses**

This recommendation proposed identifying funding sources that could mitigate the higher cost for high school students to participate in dual enrollment courses. Closing the fee gap for these classes could help increase the overall pipeline of future legal professionals. This proposal is still under development

## **II.c. Amend Small Claims Limits for Businesses**

This recommendation, which was tied to Interim Recommendation III.b. (in Section I above), proposed increasing the small claims jurisdictional limit above \$10,000. The Business and Licensure Models Work Group has been exploring the impact of various limits, the number of cases that might be included in the broader range, and the

approaches taken by other states. The Commission’s final recommendation on this issue is included below in Section IV.g.

## **II.g. Allow for Artificial Intelligence in Court Interpretation**

This recommendation encouraged the Court to lean into the use of emerging artificial intelligence technology to augment the use of in-person and telephonic interpreter services. The Court’s Language Access Advisory Committee and OJA staff met with several AI vendors to assess the current (and developing) state of this new technology. No vendors were presently able to meet the recommendation’s goal of using AI for in-court interpretation at a level that would satisfy the requirements of that practice. Even so, as explained below in Section IV.e, there may be viable options for using AI interpretation services to supplement court staff functions.

## **III.d. Finalize Administrative Rule 14**

This recommendation asked the Court to finalize its rule on remote proceedings and make them part of the normal course of court operations. The existing rule has been in an interim status since September 2022. The Court posted a proposed final rule for public comment in April 2025.

## **III.h. Require Electronic Device Access in Court Facilities**

This recommendation requested the Court to amend its rules to require trial courts to provide reasonable access to Wi-Fi services (where present) in court facilities. It also requested a rule obligating trial courts to allow court participants to bring portable electronic devices into court facilities, without sacrificing judicial authority to protect the safety of witnesses and parties in individual courtrooms. The Court’s Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure developed a draft rule to implement this recommendation. The draft rule was posted for public comment in April 2025.

# **c. Held or Denied Interim Recommendations**

## **I.g. Supplement Funding for Legal Aid Service**

This recommendation proposed seeking additional legislative appropriation to the Court’s Civil Legal Aid Fund, which provides funding to legal aid providers around the state. Legal aid providers pursued the recommendation, but no additional funds were appropriated. In

fact, as part of statewide budget cuts in response to projected revenue shortfalls, the Fund was reduced by five percent—from \$3M annually to \$2.85M.

## **II.a. Amend I.C. § 33-43-2-1**

This recommendation proposed amending the statutory provision that currently criminalizes the practice of law in Indiana by any individual not actively licensed in good standing as an Indiana lawyer. This criminal provision is at odds with the concept of allied legal professionals (along with other existing programs like the popular and widely used Certified Legal Intern/Graduate program authorized in Admission and Discipline Rule 2.1). In conversations between OJA staff and legislators, the decision was made to pursue this amendment after the regulatory sandbox and allied legal professional pilots had been developed and launched.

## **II.d. Municipal Data Breach Immunity**

This recommendation proposed amending Indiana Code article 34-30 to protect courts and municipalities from civil liability if a court participant using an electronic device and Wi-Fi in a court facility causes a data breach or malware attack. This concern was seen as a deterrent to courts offering greater Wi-Fi access and increasing the use of electronic devices. As the recommendation was explored further, the complexity of issues exceeded the Commission's expertise and time to develop. It may be that implementation of a rule responsive to Interim Recommendation III.h. (above) makes this revision unnecessary.

## **III.c. Amend Alternative Dispute Resolution Rule 2.5**

This recommendation proposed revising the ADR rules to provide a track for allied legal professionals to be listed on Indiana's mediator registry, including qualification standards, continuing education obligations, and certification requirements. This concept will likely be developed as the allied legal professional program grows and the use of mediation in small claims cases develops.

## **III.j. Amend Admission & Discipline Rule 23**

This recommendation proposed an amendment to Indiana's professional discipline regulations to include as a factor in mitigation that professional misconduct occurred during pro bono service. After review by the Court's Office of Judicial and Attorney Regulation, the Court declined to amend its rule.



---

## IV. Additional Recommendations

Each of the Commission's five work groups submitted final, detailed reports. These reports reflected over a year's worth of significant substantive analysis and hard work. What follows are the Commission's new recommendations based on its collective review of the individual work group reports. In some instances, work group recommendations have been merged or rephrased to reflect this process.

### **a. Provide for Ongoing Oversight and Management of Legal Futures Initiatives**

**Designate a director, staff person, or committee to coordinate future efforts and centralize information from the Commission's programs.**

The Commission's objectives and initiatives aimed at curing Indiana's legal services and attorney shortages will require ongoing support and development. A common theme in other states that have responded to similar challenges is the identification of a director, staff person, or key stakeholder to carry on the messaging, development, and organization of programs designed to respond to the attorney shortage.

The Court should designate an entity—a staff member or Supreme Court or Judicial Conference committee—with ongoing oversight, marketing, and coordination of the Commission's recommendations so they do not “die on the vine.” This entity would be responsible for approving grants, overseeing the marketing of grants to law schools, bar associations, and attorneys, and continuing to modify and respond to recommendations in this report. While this entity does not have to be tasked solely with combating the legal deserts in Indiana, it should be one person or a small group that will continue the important discussions, work, and coordination to respond to the growing need for attorneys and allied legal professionals.

Moreover, as various initiatives are formed and implemented, it will be critical that relevant information be localized on a single webpage. Currently, information is maintained on the Commission's website. When the Commission concludes on July 1, 2025, with the filing of

this report, a webpage should continue to be devoted to resources available to attorneys and allied legal professionals.

Just as employers recruit prospective employees and colleges recruit new students, Indiana's legal community must affirmatively recruit skilled legal professionals to our areas of high legal need. Such recruitment must include not only law students but also existing attorneys with an interest in moving interstate from other jurisdictions or intrastate from urban to rural practice, as well as ALPs.

Having a centralized location for all grants, programs, and materials will be vital. This webpage could also include information on health insurance, financial incentives, and opportunities already in existence, such as low-cost CLEs and Westlaw for attorneys who serve as public defenders. If an attorney is considering a practice in a legal desert, having a webpage that provides one-stop shopping to all available support resources is likely to reduce barriers and incentivize relocation.

## **b. Funding for Scholarships**

**Seek private sector funding for deputy prosecutor and public defender scholarship program.**

As explained in Section III, House Enrolled Act 1515 created a public service attorney scholarship for incoming law students who commit to serving as public defenders or deputy prosecutors, but no state funding was appropriated in the upcoming biennial budget for this program. Alternative private sector funding should be sought, with the Commission and its partner organizations including letters of support as allowed. Additionally, one potential new funding stream might be offering, during the annual registration window for attorneys, an option for lawyers to donate money to this fund.

### **c. Public Service Pathway Pilot**

**Approve in concept a Public Service Pathway Pilot for Law Licensure in Indiana and appoint an implementation committee to develop specific details and propose relevant rule changes by July 1, 2027.**

The Court should pilot a holistic and tailored pathway that includes curricular and practice requirements, including an MPT-like exam based on Indiana law as a second, new track to law licensure for Indiana-based accredited law school students—one that can allow them to become practice ready to work in a particular high-need field or area across our state. The Commission has unanimously approved the initial parameters of the pathway attached as **Appendix A** and recommends the Court appoint an implementation committee.

At least thirteen states have enacted, or are considering, innovative, non-bar-exam pathways to licensure. The Commission’s proposed pathway, unlike any other implemented so far, includes both curricular (in law school) and practice (post-graduation) requirements. And it also aligns with the Public Interest Scholarship Program.

Rather than an “alternative pathway,” the initial parameters are not directed toward a pathway that is somehow “easier” or “less demanding” than a bar exam. They are instead parameters that are aimed at being more or differently demanding than the current bar exam experience. By combining elements of coursework, an exam, and supervised practice, the proposed pathway can overcome concerns that critics have raised about each of those assessment methods individually. Additionally, the initial parameters provide a tailored path to law licensure for qualified ABA-accredited Indiana-based law-school students who commit to and practice in Indiana for three years after graduation in either a high-needs public-sector field or in a legal desert, where the attorney-shortage issue is most acutely felt. And by providing conditional admission, the initial parameters ensure public protection while affording participants the opportunity to demonstrate fitness to practice.

The Pathways workgroup, in early 2025, surveyed 216 students (108 from McKinney and 108 from Maurer) on the initial parameters. The three questions asked, and the responses received, reflect significant student interest:

1. Understanding the requirements and commitments related to this opportunity as described, would you be interested in declaring a commitment to take this alternative pathway to licensure?

	Yes	Maybe	No
1L	18	32	29
2L	21	31	19
3L	23	14	29
Total	62 28.7%	77 35.6%	77 35.6%

2. Would scholarship support in the amount of at least \$5,000 per semester for the remainder of your JD degree substantially increase the likelihood that you would take advantage of the opportunity as described?

	Yes	Maybe	No
1L	46	16	17
2L	42	19	10
3L	38	14	14
Total	126 58.3%	49 22.7%	41 19%

3. If the opportunity was as described but included a defined set of practice objectives to be met during the three years of practice (e.g., number of hours of legal representation provided, types of matters handled, number of clients served) would you be substantially more or less likely to take advantage of the opportunity?

	More Likely	Less Likely
1L	37	42
2L	38	33
3L	37	29
Total	112 51.9%	104 48.1%

## **d. Public Service Loan Repayment Assistance**

**Establish a program that provides student loan repayment assistance for lawyers in public service careers.**

The Federal John R. Justice Grant Program provides limited student loan assistance for public defenders and prosecutors. But funds for this program have decreased in the two years that Indiana has participated. And though Interim Recommendation I.f. (in Section III above) was targeted at private practitioners serving in areas of high legal need, the program does not include other government lawyers or lawyers in the non-profit public service sector, such as legal aid lawyers. A similar program could fill the gap between the limited federal grant funding and the Interim Recommendation. There are several potential structures for such a program, including reimbursement of payments after assurance that program qualifications are met and, potentially, income limits. The Indiana Bar Foundation already administers a similar program and might be able to administer this program.

## **e. Implement Advanced Courtroom Technologies**

**Implement pilots of judicial drafting assistance technology and speech-to-text transcription through ambient listening technology.**

Many Indiana judges face unsustainable workloads, with caseload studies showing judicial resources stretched thin. Some counties need partial judicial support, but adding judges in those areas would be fiscally irresponsible. By contrast, tools that increase efficiency—especially those using emerging technologies—cost far less. The Court should lead the implementation of such tools.

Currently, judicial officers manually research precedents, draft routine orders, and handle administrative aspects of case management, diverting their time and expertise away from rendering thoughtful judgments. AI-driven drafting programs could alleviate this burden. Marion County is already exploring how to use these programs effectively. A pilot project supported by the Court could test the use of similar tools in counties with demonstrated resource constraints under the supervision of the Court's Innovation Committee.

Similarly, documentation requirements burden the judicial system, particularly in counties at the margins of judicial capacity. Court reporter shortages, for example, create transcription bottlenecks. Judges struggle with overwhelming documentation and reporting requirements resulting in judicial and staff expertise being diverted from core functions to paperwork, manual notetaking and record review. Using speech-to-text transcription through ambient listening technology, like Marion County's courtroom setup, could take those tasks from judges and court staff and allow them to focus more on the substantive work of courtroom proceedings.

## **f. Support the Growth of Legal Education**

**Endorse and collaborate on legal education initiatives, support legislation that addresses systemic legal education gaps, and launch legal education pilot programs in secondary schools.**

Indiana's attorney shortage drives widespread legal illiteracy that affects both civic engagement and access to justice. Through educational and targeted programs, Indiana's courts, and the Indiana Supreme Court in particular, have the unique ability to provide transformative opportunities through educational leadership that no other governmental branch can provide. The judiciary's stature can elevate and synchronize many existing, ongoing efforts to introduce the legal profession as one that is worthy and viable.

By positioning judges as accessible mentors and legal education as a civic necessity, the Court can simultaneously build public trust, enhance access to justice, and strengthen Indiana's legal workforce pipeline. The Court should develop and distribute "Behind the Robe" educational content aimed at these goals, which can both humanize the judiciary and improve legal literacy. Such a program could be hosted on a digital platform and feature judge's profiles, narratives, and career stories about judicial officer pathways. It could also include youth-focused legal education videos addressing topics on student rights and responsibilities, navigating the juvenile justice system, court protections for young people, and foundational legal principles as well as practical applications.

The Court should also promote and collaborate on existing legal education initiatives. For example, it could implement court-approved curriculum for dual-credit courses. It could

also recommend all public middle schools incorporate [Street Law's Rule of Law for All](#) curriculum into social studies classes, adapting existing lesson plans to address Indiana-specific statutes and case studies. And it could develop virtual reality modules simulating court proceedings for civic education units. The Court of Appeals currently holds oral arguments in up to 40 communities per year through their Appeals on Wheels program, which could be expanded to include an educational program after each argument.

The Court should also support legislation aimed at addressing systemic legal education gaps, like funding for legal literacy programming, career pipeline development, and educator professional development. And it could pilot programs in collaboration with school districts, such as offering [Law Shelf: A Project of National Paralegal College and in partnership with Purdue University Global Law School](#) resources as extracurricular or elective options or using AI-driven educational tools and platforms in selected school districts to evaluate their effectiveness in improving legal literacy and readiness for legal careers.

## **g. Amend Small Claims Limits & Procedural Rules**

**Consider increasing the small claims court jurisdiction limit from \$10,000 to potentially \$25,000 or provide for periodic increases to account for inflation.**

This recommendation was initially made in the Interim Report, but the Court requested additional development. And Interim Recommendation III.b., as mentioned in Section III above, resulted in an amendment to avoid requiring lawyers in specified business cases up to the small claims jurisdictional limit.

As the Interim Report explained, these recommendations were made because the cost to small business owners of hiring an attorney can sometimes outweigh the value of pursuing a claim. An attorney who represents one of these businesses for other matters and is asked to pursue one of those claims must candidly explain the impact of the cost, risking the client relationship. That math can be true even when the claim exceeds the current small claims jurisdictional limit of \$10,000.

Any gain in efficiency and cost savings for business owners in amending the small claims limits, though, must be balanced with the human impact on lower-income litigants who might be increasingly swept into small claims courts for higher dollar amounts. It would be most appropriate for the Legislature to weigh these competing considerations, as a matter of public policy, in considering whether to raise the jurisdictional limit.

That said, analysis of data provided by the OJA on Small Claims, Evictions, and Credit Collections cases decided since January 1, 2022, reveals a relatively small number of cases with judgments between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

	\$0–\$10K	>\$10K–\$20K	>\$20K–\$25k
# of cases	422,390	31,307	3,241
% of total	92.4%	6.9%	0.7%

It is impossible, however, to estimate how many cases—if any—are not being filed today based on the existing limit of \$10,000. And if the value of a plaintiff’s claim exceeds \$10,000, but the plaintiff determines that the matter does not warrant hiring an attorney, the plaintiff could choose to forgo any excess recovery. Nevertheless, an increase in the limit reflects the effects of inflation and would allow more businesses to litigate their cases in an expedited and informal setting while not imposing any significant additional burden on the courts.

Additionally, inflation has been higher during the nearly four years in which the current \$10,000 limit has been in place than during any other four-year period in more than four decades. This high rate has effectively lowered the real threshold for small claims, denying access to the courts for many controversies that otherwise might have been resolved, but are not of sufficient value to pursue in the general courts.

The Commission recommends the Legislature consider adopting an inflation-based adjustment mechanism applicable to small claims court jurisdictional limits comparable to those used in other states. A similar model to adjust the small claims limits in Indiana, where the inflation adjustment is substantial (e.g., at least \$3,000) and with the new limit rounded to the nearest \$1,000, would avoid the need to make future statutory adjustments. This adjusted jurisdictional limit should not, however, be allowed to decrease during times of deflation.



## **h. Regionalize Judicial and Bar Association Resources**

### **Adapt and expand the administrative district structure within the judiciary and for organized bar associations.**

Indiana's counties are currently organized into 26 administrative districts as defined in Administrative Rule 3. In 2010, the Judicial Conference of Indiana's Strategic Planning Committee recommended this structure in its [New Way Forward](#) report to improve the efficiency and accessibility of the judicial system. In 2020, the Strategic Planning Committee noted:

*Caseloads vary from county to county within a judicial district. Certain cases require a great deal of specialized knowledge; other cases are very time-consuming. These differences may impact the time litigants must wait to have their cases fully resolved. [. . .] Some districts have already undertaken steps to share judicial workload and expand access to certified problem-solving courts, serving as models for other districts.*

The Strategic Planning Committee further recommended the adoption of a unified court system for administrative purposes:

*The administrative districts shall continue to function with greater emphasis on sharing resources, assisting fellow judicial officers, and expecting cooperation in the field of certified problem-solving courts. The workload of the courts within a district should be adequately shared in a way that litigants can receive court time and decisions in a reasonable amount of time. Local rules should align within their district and document their cooperative efforts.*

Adaption and expansion of the current district system would increase efficiency, expand services, diversify programs and provide comparable allocations of resources among Indiana courts, especially those in geographic proximity to one another. It would also increase collaboration among judges and court staff within each district or across districts, including the creation of problem-solving courts.

The General Assembly is reviewing judicial resource utilization data across counties, having recently eliminated certain courts primarily due to fiscal constraints. Increased collaboration within each district could offset existing imbalances in weighted caseloads among counties and districts.

And bar associations should be encouraged to organize their activities by administrative district rather than by, or in addition to, individual counties. Bar associations functioning at the district level would broaden networking opportunities for their members and facilitate dialogue and exchange of ideas among members of the bench and bar, hopefully filling areas otherwise underserved by the legal community.

## **i. Advise Practitioners on Alternative Fee Structures**

**Provide an advisory opinion from the Indiana Supreme Court's Disciplinary Commission on flat/alternative fee ethical considerations and safe harbors.**

Attorneys face significant barriers to building sustainable practices in legal deserts, including high overhead costs, clients' limited ability to pay viable rates, and a shrinking base of local business interests with legal needs. In particular, the traditional and pervasive hourly-based-rate business model limits a sole practitioner's earnings to the number of hours that person can work and is often insufficient to support costs, such as research and technology resources, office space, and insurance. Alternative and flat fee models are a potential solution to these challenges, but they come with risks. Many attorneys are uncomfortable employing them given concerns on enforceability and the cost of payment disputes.

The Supreme Court's Coalition for Court Access is working on this issue. And the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission issued an informative opinion on this topic, titled [Opinion #2-23 - Ethical Considerations about Getting Paid \(August 17, 2023\)](#). The opinion, however, does not address the laws and safe harbors that apply to alternative/flat fee models. This is an important advisory matter that needs to be addressed.

## **j. Create and Support Undergraduate-Law School Pipelines**

**Develop undergraduate-law school pipelines led by Indiana's public law schools and leverage the Court's leadership role to obtain funding and overcome barriers.**

Pipeline programs in undergraduate education help to both recruit students into law school and increase their capacity to not only succeed in law school but also in entering the legal profession. Nationally, they generally exist in three categories: (1) mentorship programs that develop student ties to law schools and the legal profession, targeting professional identity; (2) curricular pathways that train undergraduate students in legal skills and foundational knowledge to prepare them for admissions tests and applications; and (3) "boot camp" programs that compress curricular pathways into shorter, intensive programs.

Regardless of the category, the goals of each program are generally the same: demystify legal education; initiate and support mentor relationships; launch peer networks; facilitate law school application; and compete against other programs (e.g., business, STEM) for talented students. But they differ in the degree of legal skills and legal knowledge imparted, the existence or lack of classroom components, whether residential or not, and whether they are primarily remote or in-person. Pipeline programs can be targeted at in-state attorney needs through direct admission strategies, participation requirements, and recruitment or scholarship funding that targets in-state and rural populations. Indiana currently has several pipeline programs, including the statutory ICLEO program, IU McKinney's "Pathway to the Law" program, and IU Maurer's "Vision" program.

With the Supreme Court's support, IU's public law schools can lead efforts to strengthen these programs or develop additional pipeline programs by partnering with undergraduate institutions statewide. Court support could include start-up or ongoing funding, staff support to manage or implement pipeline programs, and scholarship resource assistance for participants.

Additionally, the Court's leadership role in Indiana's legal profession could help secure state or private funding to cover production costs for pipeline initiatives. The Court's voice could be particularly supportive when intra- and inter-institutional barriers arise as

programs are expanded. Other members of the judiciary—appellate judges, trial courts, and court personnel—could all be encouraged to participate as instructors, mentors, speakers, or hosts.

## **k. Implement Document Automation Tools and MyCase Improvements**

**Improve existing court technology systems through enhanced guided interviews, document automation, user-friendly interfaces, and automated filing verification.**

Manual entry and review requirements create inefficiencies in case processing, and paper-intensive processes waste resources. Continued improvement of Indiana’s court technology infrastructure through enhanced guided interviews, document automation, user-friendly interfaces, and automated filing verification could alleviate these challenges and preserve limited court user and staff time.

For public users, enhanced research tools such as AI-powered case and document search with advanced parameters can make information easier to find. And the filing process could be streamlined with pre-submission verification to reduce errors. For example, the e-filing system could evaluate a document before filing to identify potential errors, allowing the filer to correct the error before submitting the document to the court. And automatic field completion within the e-filing system could capture data from the document to populate fields on the screen, such as the court, filing code, party, and attorney.

For court staff, automated case processing could allow character recognition for automatic event coding. Common filing types, such as appearances and basic motions, could then be processed automatically through robotic process automation. Workflow enhancements like AI-generated reports, automatic hearing calendaring, and AI-assisted decision support tools could expedite court staff processes.

## **I. Informational Videos to Aid Litigants**

**Develop a comprehensive Court Process Video Library to address common points of user confusion and reduce barriers to court access.**

Many court users, particularly self-represented litigants, struggle to understand basic court procedures, form requirements, and legal terminology, leading to filing errors, missed deadlines, and courtroom confusion. Written instructions alone are often insufficient, especially for visual learners or those with limited reading proficiency. Language barriers create additional complications for non-English speakers navigating the court system. Court staff often spend substantial time repeatedly explaining the same basic procedures, which reduce their capacity for other essential duties. Without accessible, multilingual visual explanations of court processes, many Hoosiers face unnecessary barriers to justice.

A comprehensive video library of up to twenty short videos (3–5 minutes each) could explain frequent court procedures and requirements. Content could target the top ten questions identified by court staff and the top ten most-accessed forms on [IndianaLegalHelp.org](https://www.indianalegalhelp.org).

This recommendation could also complement other recommendations identified in this report, such as: (g) Support and Growth of the Legal Profession; (j) Create and Support Undergraduate-Law School Pipelines, and; (n) Mentorships.

The Court's leadership in assembling an interdisciplinary media team—including, for example, undergraduate and law school students, lawyers who practice in areas commonly involving self-represented litigants or non-English speakers, and IndianaLegalHelp personnel—has the potential to achieve multiple goals. It can not only create and produce high-quality informational videos to assist litigants, but also educate undergraduates about the legal profession, foster mentorship opportunities between experienced and emerging lawyers, and highlight the interdisciplinary nature of teaching and learning about the law.

## **m. Study Use of Clerk Staff**

**Conduct a statewide study of operational variations in clerk staff to develop better uniformity and efficiency in case processing.**

Indiana's 92 counties operate with significant variations in how court clerks interpret their responsibilities, implement technology, and establish procedural standards. And clerks maintain considerable independence, which sometimes delays statewide initiatives and technological adoption. This fragmented structure prevents standardized training programs, efficient resource allocation, and consistent case processing across county lines. Some counties even struggle with inefficiencies that directly impact court users and access to justice. Ultimately, the county-by-county variation undermines the judiciary's ability to implement uniform improvements to court access and administration statewide. And, since the clerk is an elected position, there is continual turnover and need for training.

Indiana universities should be invited to research the role of the clerk, building on the 2007 report from The Commission on Local Government Reform, [Streamlining Local Government: We've Got to Stop Governing Like This](#), also known as the Kernan-Shepard Report. The Indiana Law Review published [an evaluation of that commission's recommendation to eliminate township government](#), but a similar scholarly report on the role of the clerk could not be found. Creating better uniformity could reduce duplicative administrative functions, decrease technology implementation costs, lower training expenses, and improve efficiency in case processing.

## **n. Mentorships**

**Establish a mentorship program for interested public service attorneys.**

The Indiana State Bar Association runs a very effective mentorship program. In partnership with that program, public service stakeholders could provide the ISBA with a list of public service attorneys who are willing to act as mentors and allow the ISBA to directly pair them with public service attorneys seeking mentors. Such public service mentorships would then become a part of ISBA's ongoing mentorship program.

## **o. Centralize Public Service Job Availability**

Establish a webpage to create a one-stop shop for law students seeking public service internships as well as for prospective and current public service employees seeking public service legal career opportunities.

Many public service organizations in both the government and non-profit sectors offer internships—during the school year or summer, paid or unpaid. Creating a webpage that centralizes information about these opportunities would make it easier for law students to find and compare opportunities.

Similarly, many public service organizations are understaffed due to many factors related to the attorney shortage. And while these organizations list career opportunities on their websites and social media, it would assist prospective candidates to have a single location to search for legal public service career opportunities in Indiana. A centralized webpage could consolidate this information for all public service agencies, making it easier for legal professionals to find and compare opportunities. OJA previously had a similar page on its website for public defender and prosecutor positions along with the ability to subscribe to updates as new positions were posted.

---

## V. What's Next...

The work of this Commission was, necessarily, limited. There remain bigger picture conversations that need to be had—and actions to take—if Indiana's legal services shortage is to be resolved. Though these conversations exceeded the scope and scale of what this Commission could reasonably accomplish, it would be a mistake to leave certain insights unwritten.

### **a. Would-be Indiana lawyers need greater access to legal education institutions**

If Valparaiso University had not shuttered its law school in 2020, the current legal services shortage would have presumably still arisen. Indeed, even before 2020, rural counties were struggling to find public defenders and prosecutors, and the rural bars were aging faster than they were attracting new lawyers. Increasing numbers of litigants were representing themselves as legal costs rose—cost increases partly in response to market demand and to increasing law school debt burdens—and the “modest means” gap was already visible.

But the loss of Valpo is probably still the largest single contributor to the “attorney shortage” component of Indiana's legal services shortage. It dramatically, and thus far permanently, reduced our lawyer production pipeline. And the loss no doubt accelerated the shortage from a problem to an imminent crisis, particularly in northwestern Indiana counties that might not qualify as legal deserts or rural counties.

Moreover, an individual with existing roots and connection to a rural community is far more likely after graduation to practice in that community. But as explained in Section II, the current state of Indiana's legal education framework leaves many Hoosiers without viable access to a law school.

So, to the extent “more lawyers” is one of the solutions to this crisis, one way to achieve that solution is expanding the lawyer production pipeline. This is quite obviously an intricate issue. There are possibilities, although each are littered with obstacles of cost, accreditation, regulation, and more:

- Reopening Valparaiso Law School
- Opening satellite law schools in the Indiana University family
- Access to Indiana licensure by graduates of online law schools



## **b. Promote the value of practicing law in Indiana**

Many graduates of Indiana's law schools practice elsewhere—most from IU Maurer and nearly all from Notre Dame. If those numbers could be adjusted even slightly, this might be a way to achieve “more lawyers” as a solution to the legal services shortage problem. To do that, though, we must sell the idea of staying and practicing here—the notion that Indiana is a good place to live. We must promote and market the value of not just being a lawyer, but also the unique importance of being a Hoosier lawyer.

## **c. Curb student loan debt**

It is no secret that traditional law school models are expensive, and that those costs have been steadily increasing. Indiana's law schools have worked hard to mitigate the financial impact on their students through scholarships, endowments, and other awards. A law school degree from a fully online law school like Purdue Global is less expensive, although the course of study can take more time than a traditional path. And to be sure, there might be some value in having financially invested in your legal education.

Data supports that most lawyers pass the bar exam with high student loan debt. Naturally, such debt influences their professional decisions. In 2024, [the American Bar Association surveyed its young lawyers division on student debt](#) and found the following:

- 85% reported borrowing for law school, bar exam preparation, or prior education.
- The median debt load was \$112,500 for law school tuition and related costs and \$137,500 for all loans at law school graduation.
- 75% said they had changed their career plans because of their debt.
- 60% said they weighed salary more heavily in choosing a job than they would have before entering law school.
- Over 40% of those in private practice said their debt pushed them to a job that was less public interest focused than they had intended.
- Graduates with high debt loads were unable to save for retirement or accumulate emergency savings and felt they had to delay life decisions like marriage or having children.

What do these statistics mean for Indiana's legal profession? Graduates with high student loan debt might not be able to explore legal opportunities in areas where shortages exist—public defense, prosecutors, and legal aid—in favor of what they believe will be a

more lucrative private practice. And in private practice, they might look more at the “Big Law” career path—in Indiana, those firms are predominantly found in Marion County and the surrounding areas—rather than a smaller or solo practice in a rural county where, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, private-sector wages lag behind state and national averages. It also means they may be more likely to burn out, struggle, or leave the profession, which further exacerbates the lawyer shortage.

Addressing the issue of student loan debt is a massive problem on its own. There are, again, many ways in which Indiana institutions are already working on this. And nothing should be read to imply that law schools are in complete control of the factors that drive law school costs. They are not. But the burden still falls on our profession to help find solutions. Ideas may include advocating for a stronger system of higher education, better jobs, higher wages, better health insurance, and better access to health care in legal deserts (especially for women, who comprise over half of the recent graduating law school classes).

#### **d. Continued success requires continuing funding**

The Commission recognizes the current fiscal climate and the limited availability of state-level funding. But local funding has been hit just as hard—if not harder. Counties increasingly struggle to absorb the costs of maintaining a state court system responsible for applying and enforcing the law. Without changes in Indiana’s economy, that struggle will only continue to grow in the foreseeable future.

State-level funding of courts pays long-term dividends and drives down costs across the board. Investments in statewide electronic filing, case management, and jail management systems have proven to create uniform local processes, resulting in better data and greater efficiencies for the state. This funding must continue, and it must continue to be seen for what it truly is: an investment that generates tremendous savings through improved outcomes and expanded opportunities.

---

# Commission Members

**Hon. Nancy Vaidik, Co-Chair**

COURT OF APPEALS OF INDIANA

**Justin Forkner, Co-Chair**

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

**Dean Karen Bravo (by designees Vice Dean Max Huffman and Prof. Cynthia Baker)**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY ROBERT H. MCKINNEY SCHOOL OF LAW

**Rep. Ed DeLaney**

INDIANA HOUSE DISTRICT 86

**Sen. Sue Glick**

INDIANA SENATE DISTRICT 13

**Elizabeth Green**

GENERAL COUNSEL, INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Emily Guenin-Hodson**

GUENIN LAW OFFICE, P.C.

**Prof. Bill Henderson**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY MAURER SCHOOL OF LAW

**Michael Jasaitis**

AUSTEN KUIPER JASAITIS, P.C.; PRESIDENT, INDIANA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

**Angela Jones**

THE LAW OFFICE OF ANGELA M. JONES, LLC

**Amy Karozos**

STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**Jon Laramore**

INDIANA LEGAL SERVICES

**Jeremy Morris**

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Michael Nossett**

GENERAL COUNSEL, INDIANA OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Dean Christiana Ochoa (by designee Dean Anne McFadden)**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY MAURER SCHOOL OF LAW

**Lara O'Dell**

PROGRAM CHAIR, LEGAL AND PARALEGAL STUDIES, IVY TECH INDIANAPOLIS

**Kathy Osborn**

FAEGRE DRINKER BIDDLE & REATH LLP

**Patrick Price**

GENERAL COUNSEL, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**Bob Rath**

CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

**Hon. Hunter Reece**

WARREN CIRCUIT COURT

**Brad Skolnik**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

**Rep. Greg Steuerwald**

INDIANA HOUSE DISTRICT 40

**Sen. Greg Taylor**

INDIANA SENATE DISTRICT 33

**Hon. Leanna Weissmann**

COURT OF APPEALS OF INDIANA

**Josh Woodward**

COUNSEL TO CHIEF JUSTICE RUSH

**Staff Support**

**Belen Dealmonte**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO JUDGE NANCY H. VAIDIK

**April Dubree**

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR, INDIANA OFFICE OF COURT SERVICES

**Phyllisia Gant**

DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

**Georgia McCart**

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR, INDIANA OFFICE OF COURT SERVICES

**Leah McGee**

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR TO CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER JUSTIN FORKNER

**Kate Mead**

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT ANALYST, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

**Business & Licensure Models Work Group**

**Kathy Osborn, Work Group Chair**

FAEGRE DRINKER BIDDLE & REATH LLP

**Stacy Atkinson, Ph.D.**

CHANCELLOR, IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Hon. Kimberly Bacon**

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP SMALL CLAIMS

**Rep. Ed DeLaney**

INDIANA HOUSE DISTRICT 86

**Hon. Sarah Evans-Barker**

SENIOR JUDGE, U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

**Emily Guenin-Hodson**

GUENIN LAW OFFICE, P.C.

**Prof. Bill Henderson**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY MAURER SCHOOL OF LAW

**Angela Jones**

THE LAW OFFICE OF ANGELA M. JONES, LLC

**Raio Krishnayya**

EXECUTIVE & LEGAL DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR VICTIM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**Hon. Justin McAdam**

INDIANA TAX COURT

**Lara O'Dell**

PROGRAM CHAIR, LEGAL AND PARALEGAL STUDIES, IVY TECH INDIANAPOLIS

**Bill Potter**

GENERAL COUNSEL, VICE-PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY, KEY BENEFIT ADMINISTRATORS

**Bob Rath**

CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

**Kate Mead (Staff Support)**

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT ANALYST, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

## **Pathways to Admission & Education Work Group**

**Dean Anne McFadden, Work Group Chair**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY MAURER SCHOOL OF LAW

**Prof. Cynthia Baker**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY ROBERT H. MCKINNEY SCHOOL OF LAW

**Mark GiaQuinta**

HALLER & COLVIN, PC

**Vice Dean Max Huffman**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY ROBERT H. MCKINNEY SCHOOL OF LAW

**Andrew Jones**

FISHERS HIGH SCHOOL

**Jeremy Morris**

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Lara O'Dell**

PROGRAM CHAIR, LEGAL AND PARALEGAL STUDIES, IVY TECH INDIANAPOLIS

**Brad Skolnik**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

**Rep. Greg Steuerwald**

INDIANA HOUSE DISTRICT 40

**Paul Sweeney**

ICE MILLER LLP

**Sen. Greg Taylor**

INDIANA SENATE DISTRICT 33.

**Josh Woodward**

COUNSEL TO CHIEF JUSTICE RUSH

**Phyllisia Gant (Staff Support)**

DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

## **Incentivizing Rural Practice Work Group**

**Hon. Hunter Reece, Work Group Chair**

WARREN CIRCUIT COURT

**Alexa Campbell**

TAYLOR, MINNETTE, SCHNEIDER & CLUTTER, P.C.

**Thomas Estabrook**

MAYOR, CITY OF BICKNELL

**Sen. Sue Glick**

INDIANA SENATE DISTRICT 13

**Elizabeth Green**

GENERAL COUNSEL, INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Hon. Melissa May**

INDIANA COURT OF APPEALS

**James Roberts**

ATTORNEY

**Brooke Scheurich**

LAW OFFICE OF BROOKE SCHEURICH, P.C.

**Dan Shackle**

FROST BROWN TODD LLP

**Beau Zoeller**

FROST BROWN TODD LLP

**April Dubree (Staff Support)**

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR, INDIANA OFFICE OF COURT SERVICES

**Georgia McCart (Staff Support)**

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR, INDIANA OFFICE OF COURT SERVICES

# **Incentivizing Public Service Work Group**

**Jon Laramore, Work Group Co-Chair**

INDIANA LEGAL SERVICES

**Rep. Greg Steuerwald, Work Group Co-Chair**

INDIANA HOUSE DISTRICT 40

**Bernice Corley**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INDIANA PUBLIC DEFENDER COUNCIL

**Andrew Cullen**

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS, INDIANA COMMISSION ON COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEYS

**Courtney Curtis**

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INDIANA PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS COUNCIL

**Amy Karozos**

STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**Raio Krishnayya**

EXECUTIVE & LEGAL DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR VICTIM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**Derrick Mason**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INDIANA COMMISSION ON COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEYS

**Tiffany Mulligan**

CHIEF OF STAFF AND CHIEF LEGAL COUNSEL, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

**Chris Naylor**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INDIANA PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS COUNCIL

**Michael Nossett**

GENERAL COUNSEL, INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Lindsay Scott**

PRESIDENT & CEO, KIDS' VOICE OF INDIANA

**Mark Stuaan**

BARNES & THORNBURG LLP

**Leah McGee (Staff support)**

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR TO CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER JUSTIN FORKNER



# **Technology Applications Work Group**

**Hon. Leanna Weissmann, Work Group Chair**

COURT OF APPEALS OF INDIANA

**Hon. Andrew Bloch**

HAMILTON CIRCUIT COURT

**Sen. Cyndi Carrasco**

INDIANA SENATE DISTRICT 36

**Prof. Fred Cate**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY MAURER SCHOOL OF LAW

**Jefferson Kisor**

BASCOM & KISOR, LLC

**Jimmie McMillian**

CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER, INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

**Chris Nancarrow**

CLERK OF THE ALLEN COUNTY CIRCUIT AND SUPERIOR COURTS

**Alexandria Pittman**

IU HEALTH

**Bob Rath**

CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

**Brooke Scheurich**

LAW OFFICE OF BROOKE SCHEURICH, PC

**Seth Wilson**

ADLER ATTORNEYS

**Hon. Stephanie Steele**

ST. JOSEPH SUPERIOR COURT

**Nancy Collins (Staff Support)**

JUDICIAL ASSISTANT TO JUDGE LEANNA WEISSMANN

**Kate Mead (Staff Support)**

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT ANALYST, INDIANA SUPREME COURT

# Appendix – Public Service Pathway Pilot for Law Licensure in Indiana

	INITIAL PARAMETERS OF PUBLIC SERVICE PATHWAY PILOT FOR LAW LICENSURE IN INDIANA
Who, What, When, and Where	<p>Students attending an ABA-accredited Indiana law school who commit to practice law in Indiana for three years following graduation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. with (1) a legal services organization that provides legal assistance to persons of limited means, (2) a public defender officer, (3) the officer of a prosecuting attorney, or (4) the Indiana Department of Child Services; or</li> <li>2. under the sponsorship of an experienced attorney in an area of high legal need as that term is defined in Admission &amp; Discipline Rule 1.2.</li> </ol> <p>Students would apply for this pathway after earning 30 credits but before completing 70 credits.</p>
Pre-Practice Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take and pass all required law school curriculum.</li> <li>2. Take and pass eight courses before graduation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indiana Constitutional Law</li> <li>• Evidence</li> <li>• Six courses from the following list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trial Practice</li> <li>○ Family Law</li> <li>○ Criminal procedure: investigation</li> <li>○ Criminal Procedure: adjudication/trial</li> <li>○ Mediation</li> <li>○ Negotiations</li> <li>○ Transactional Drafting (contracts, litigation, etc.)</li> <li>○ Interviewing and Counseling</li> <li>○ Trusts and Estates (Wills &amp; Trusts)</li> <li>○ Secured Transactions</li> <li>○ Conflict of Laws</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Successfully complete at least two different Indiana-based externships or clinics that offer a variety of experiences and opportunities for each participant to demonstrate competence in the law. At least one of these experiential learning opportunities must be directly related to the participant's chosen post-graduation placement.</li> <li>4. Take and pass an MPT-like exam, based on Indiana law, offered at test-centers multiple times each year. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. This will be a three-hour, closed-universe exam that requires the participant to perform a common lawyering task, such as drafting a letter to a client, a persuasive memorandum, or a contract provision.</li> <li>b. All necessary law would be included in the case file provided to the participant.</li> <li>c. The participant would be required to read and understand the provided legal material, apply it to a new fact scenario, and present their analysis or argument in writing to demonstrate effective communication skills.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Take and pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination any time after completing the 1L curriculum and before graduation.</li> <li>6. Graduate</li> <li>7. Pass the same character and fitness requirements for those applying for licensure via the Indiana bar exam.</li> </ol> <p>Upon successful completion of the above requirements, the participant would receive a three-year conditional license at no fee to practice law in their chosen placement.</p>
<p><b>Practice Requirements</b></p>	<p>The participant timely completes the Indiana Law Course.</p> <p>The participant timely completes all requirements for licensed attorneys, including the six-hour applied professionalism course.</p> <p>After receiving the conditional license, the participant practices law for three consecutive years in Indiana</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. with (1) a legal services organization that provides legal assistance to persons of limited means, (2) a public defender officer, (3) the officer of a prosecuting attorney, or (4) the Indiana Department of Child Services; or</li> </ol>

	<p>2. under the sponsorship of an experienced attorney in an area of high legal need as that term is defined in Admission &amp; Discipline Rule 1.2.</p> <p>An attorney can serve as a sponsor if they have (1) an active Indiana Bar license, (2) at least three years working as a licensed attorney in any U.S. state or territory, (3) at least one-year working as a licensed attorney in Indiana, and (4) no record of public discipline in any jurisdiction in the United States. The sponsoring attorney will serve in a mentor role and will not assume professional liability for the participant's conduct.</p> <p>The participant must submit an affidavit to the Board of Law Examiners, signed by either a supervising or sponsoring attorney, by December 31st of each year certifying the previous year's completion of legal practice in one of the four public-sector placements or in private practice in an area of high legal need.</p>
<b>Licensure</b>	<p>If the above requirements are satisfied, the conditional license would be converted to an unconditional license to practice law in Indiana after the participant completes a survey designed to gather information to determine the efficacy of the new pathway and to provide information for future considerations of modifications to increase its efficacy in ensuring minimum competence and practice readiness.</p>