

## Chapter 19 Attorney Assistance

### Policy 19.100 State Lawyers Assistance Committee

The State Lawyers Assistance Committee ("SLAC") has authority:

- (a) To receive, review, investigate, process and resolve all complaints and referrals to SLAC regarding lawyers whose performance or conduct may impair their ability to practice law or their professional competence.
- (b) To require lawyers within SLAC's jurisdiction to submit to a professional assessment and diagnosis and to comply with any remedial program that SLAC has established. A remedial program may include conditions on the law practice and other law-related activities of any lawyer found to be within SLAC's jurisdiction. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, requiring a lawyer to obtain medical or psychological treatment at his or her expense and to discontinue the practice of law and/or law-related activities pending completion of such treatment.
- (c) To monitor a lawyer's compliance with the recommended measures of a remedial program.
- (d) To maintain records regarding a lawyer's assistance referrals.
- (e) To prepare an annual report to the Board of Governors.
- (f) To recommend, for approval by the Board of Governors, such rules as may be necessary to properly operate SLAC.
- (g) To appoint local bar members as it may deem appropriate for carrying out the work and purpose of SLAC.

### Policy 19.101 State Lawyers Assistance Committee Review and Intake

(a) Any person may submit directly to SLAC, either orally or in writing, the name of any lawyer whose performance or conduct appears to be impairing the lawyer's professional competence or ability to practice law. A referral of a lawyer to SLAC should include a description of the circumstances and copies of any relevant documents. SLAC members who are contacted regarding a complaint or referral will obtain preliminary information and refer the matter to the chairperson. The chairperson will confirm receipt of a referral in a letter to the person making the referral. The letter must contain a disclosure substantially as follows:

"We appreciate your interest in bringing this matter to our attention. Our Committee will respond by contacting the lawyer to discuss the problem. It is important for you to understand, however, that the purpose of this Committee is to provide confidential assistance to lawyers who are impaired in the practice of law for reasons such as drug or alcohol problems, emotional problems or lack of competence. For that reason, we focus our work on determining the specific assistance that the lawyer needs and making sure that the lawyer follows a treatment or assistance program. This Committee does not deal with lawyer discipline issues. All information we receive from you will be kept confidential and will not be reported to the bar disciplinary authorities. If you believe that this lawyer has acted improperly and you wish to make a complaint to the bar, you should write to Client Assistance Office, Oregon State Bar, P.O. Box 231935, Tigard, OR 97281."

(b) If a referral is received from a member of the Bar, the letter required in paragraph (A) must also contain the following statement:

"If you are a member of the Bar, please review Oregon RPC 8.3(a) to determine whether you may have an independent obligation to contact the Bar."

(c) The OSB Client Assistance Office and the OSB Disciplinary Counsel may refer to SLAC the name of any lawyer whose performance or conduct appears to be impairing the lawyer's ability to practice law or professional competence. The referral will include a description of the circumstances and copies of any relevant documents. The State Professional Responsibility Board may refer to SLAC any lawyer whose performance or conduct may be impairing the lawyer's ability to practice or professional competence whether or not the SPRB authorizes prosecution for misconduct. The chairperson will confirm in writing referrals from the Client Assistance Office, Disciplinary Counsel's Office, or the SPRB.

### Policy 19.102 SLAC Designees

SLAC members, lawyers and other persons assisting SLAC and employees thereof working on a matter related to the Lawyers Assistance Program authorized by ORS 9.568 are designees of SLAC. Designees are subject to SLAC rules, including the confidentiality requirements set forth in Article 19(f). Appointment of a designee who is not a SLAC member will be at the discretion of the chairperson. Considerations for appointment of such a designee include, but are not limited to, the designee's qualifications, the designee's previous experience with the referred person or with a situation similar to that of the referred person and the location of the referred person and designee. The chairperson will confirm the appointment of a designee. The chairperson will advise the designee of his or her authority and obligations and will include a copy of the SLAC's rules and other pertinent SLAC information. The designee will be notified of SLAC meetings while the referral is pending and must give regular progress reports to SLAC. Those reports may be given in person, in writing, by telephone or through the chairperson. The appointment of a designee will remain in effect until the case is concluded or SLAC otherwise provides.

### Policy 19.103 Preliminary SLAC Assessment and Intake

(a) Upon receipt of a referral, the chairperson will assign the matter to one or more designees to conduct a preliminary assessment and make a recommendation to the committee. The Intake designee will gather relevant information regarding the referral including, but not limited to, interviewing the referred lawyers and the person who made the referral, and any other person who may have knowledge about the lawyer's ability to practice law or professional competence.

(b) Prior to making initial contact with the referred lawyer, the SLAC designee will notify the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program (OAAP) of the referred lawyer's name. If the OAAP informs the SLAC designee that the referred lawyer poses a substantial and imminent risk of harm to the referred lawyer or others, the SLAC designee will wait a reasonable amount of time before contacting the referred lawyer and will coordinate and communicate with OAAP about how to make contact with the referred lawyer.

(c) If, based on the preliminary assessment, the committee determines that the lawyer's professional competence or ability to practice law may be impaired, SLAC will have jurisdiction over the matter. Otherwise, the matter will be dismissed without further action.

### Policy 19.104 Notice to Referred Lawyer

(a) Prior to assuming jurisdiction, SLAC will notify the referred lawyer and provide an opportunity to respond. If jurisdiction is assumed, the chairperson will assign the matter to a designee for case development, notify the referred lawyer of the matter and direct the lawyer to meet with the designee.

Notices to the referred lawyer will include a reminder that failure to respond to or cooperate with SLAC is grounds for discipline under Oregon RPC 8.1(c) and may be reported to the proper authority. If a case is not opened, the chairperson will notify the source of the referral that the matter is being dismissed without further SLAC action.

#### Policy 19.105 State Lawyers Assistance Committee Investigations

(a) Within 30 days after notice has been given as provided in Article 19(f) of the Bar's Bylaws, the designee, either individually or with another designee, will meet with the referred lawyer to discuss the nature of the referral, SLAC's function, the general steps that will be taken, any questions that the referred lawyer may have about the process and the lawyer's explanation, opinion or questions about the referral.

(b) The designee may require the referred lawyer to authorize the release of relevant medical or other background information regarding the referred lawyer to SLAC or to a professional selected to evaluate the referred lawyer. Medical or background information is relevant, if it relates to the referred lawyer's professional competence or ability to practice law. The referred lawyer may voluntarily provide additional information.

(c) The designee may require the referred lawyer to obtain a medical or other diagnostic evaluation from a professional or a panel of professionals selected by SLAC. The scope of the medical or other diagnostic evaluation will be limited to issues related to the referred lawyer's professional competence or ability to practice law. The designee may inform the medical or other professional of the general nature of SLAC's concerns but will not disclose to the professional the identity of the referral source or any other confidential information. The lawyer must bear the expenses of the medical or other diagnostic evaluation, except that SLAC may advance the costs in cases of demonstrated financial hardship.

#### Policy 19.106 Remedial Action Plan

(a) Based on all the information gathered by the designee, SLAC will consider and determine whether the referred lawyer's performance or conduct may be impairing the lawyer's professional competence or ability to practice law. If SLAC finds that the lawyer's performance or conduct may not impair the lawyer's professional competence or ability to practice law, the matter will be dismissed and the lawyer notified of the disposition of the matter. If SLAC finds that the lawyer's professional competence or ability to practice law is impaired, SLAC will so advise the referred lawyer in writing and require the lawyer to participate in a remedial program of monitoring, treatment, counseling or training.

(b) The referred lawyer will have the opportunity to participate in determining the nature and extent of the remedial program to be undertaken, but SLAC's decision regarding the program is final.

(c) SLAC will set forth the remedial measures to be undertaken in a written agreement to be signed by the lawyer. The agreement will contain the referred lawyer's acknowledgement that failure or refusal to cooperate in the remedial program is grounds for discipline under Oregon RPC 8.1(c) and may be reported to the proper authority.

(d) SLAC may require the lawyer to submit periodic reports from persons responsible for implementing the remedial program or who have information about the lawyer's compliance.

(e) The referred lawyer must pay the costs of the remedial program that SLAC requires.

(f) The designee will monitor the referred lawyer's participation in the remedial program and will report regularly to SLAC.

(g) The remedial program may be revised from time to time, as SLAC deems appropriate, and may include an extended period of monitoring.

(h) When SLAC determines that the referred lawyer has successfully completed the remedial program and that the lawyer's ability to practice law and professional competence is no longer impaired, the case will be closed.

#### Policy 19.107 State Lawyers Assistance Committee Records & Annual Report

(a) The SLAC chairperson will maintain an intake log as a permanent record of SLAC. In it will be noted each referral to SLAC, the date of the referral, the name of the person making the referral, the name of the referred lawyer, action taken on the referral and the ultimate disposition of the referral. Written materials regarding a referral which does not result in a case being opened, will be kept with the intake log. The designee to whom a case is assigned will create a file and will maintain all reports, correspondence, records and other documents pertaining to the case. The designee is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the file and the information it contains while the file is in the designee's possession. The file on a case will be closed when the referral is dismissed, on notice to Disciplinary Counsel of non-cooperation or as provided in Article 19(g) of the Bar's Bylaws. Closed files will be maintained for ten years in locked storage at the Bar's offices. SLAC will notify the referring person of the general disposition of the referral, but not of its detailed findings or the remedial measures taken.

(b) SLAC shall submit an annual report to the Board. The report will include statistical data such as: the total number of referrals received by SLAC, the number of direct referrals, the number of referrals received from the State Professional Responsibility Board, the number of referrals to the Client Assistance Office as a result of non-cooperation with SLAC, the number and types of cases in which assistance was provided through SLAC, the number of cases completed during the reporting period and other information that will assist the Bar in evaluating the workload and effectiveness of the SLAC program. The report will not include any information that could jeopardize the confidentiality of persons participating in SLAC's programs. The report will be delivered to the Bar annually as an attachment to SLAC's annual report.

#### Policy 19.108 SLAC Exempt from Public Meetings Law

SLAC meetings are exempt from the provisions of ORS 192.610 to 192.690, pursuant to ORS 9.568(3)(b). OAAP staff may be invited to attend SLAC meetings, including case review of referred lawyers, if appropriate releases have been signed by the referred lawyers.

## Chapter 20 Sustainability

#### Policy 20.100 Sustainability

Because Bar operations and the practice of law impact the environment and society generally, the Bar will be cognizant of sustainability in its internal operating practices as well as in its service to members. Internally, the Chief Executive Officer will designate a sustainability coordinator for Bar operations, will encourage continuous sustainability improvement in Bar operations, and will report to the Board of Governors at least annually on progress and impediments. In the practice of law, principles of sustainability may be important in addressing competing economic, social and environmental priorities that impact future generations. The Bar will encourage education and dialogue on how law impacts the