

# 2025 ACLEA'S BEST AWARD WINNERS

Thank you to everyone who made a submission. Congratulations to all of the 2025 award winners.

## ***Marketing***

Award of Professional Excellence – New Hampshire Bar

Award of Outstanding Achievement – Lawline

## ***Programs***

Frank V. Harris Award of Professional Excellence – Law Society of Ontario

Award of Outstanding Achievement – Minnesota CLE

## ***Publications***

Award of Professional Excellence – Oregon State Bar

Award of Outstanding Achievement – ICLE

## ***Public Interest***

Award of Professional Excellence – Judicial Commission of NSW

Award of Outstanding Achievement – New York State Bar Association

## ***Technology***

John Day Memorial Award for Professional Excellence in Technology – Massachusetts CLE

Award of Outstanding Achievement – AHLA

# 2025 ACLEA'S BEST AWARD WINNERS

**Award Category: Award of Professional Excellence - Marketing**  
**Organization: NHBACLE New Hampshire Bar Association Continuing Legal Education**  
**Title: Independence Day 2024- The New Hampshire Constitution**  
**Submitted by: Vince O'Brien**  
**Project Team: New Hampshire Bar Professional Development Team**

## **Project Description:**

The New Hampshire Bar Association CLE Department created a Marketing Campaign centered around Independence Day and concepts involved with the 4th of July. In April 2024, we had a unique program, "New Hampshire Constitutional Law," that featured a variety of knowledgeable constitutional experts who provided analysis and comparisons between the New Hampshire and Federal Constitutions.

Before the sale, we'd sold 72 combined online seminars (archived versions of the webcast) and audio versions. The sale ran for three days through the July 4th weekend. As a direct result of the sale, we were able to sell an additional 53 versions of the program.

There was an unanticipated benefit or two because of the sale. Most of the customers taking part in the sale purchased multiple items. The other unanticipated benefit was the message and branding associated with promoting a New Hampshire Bar Constitutional Law program over the 4th of July Holiday.

We believe it helped our members feel good about our Bar and our CLE program.

**Award Category: Award of Outstanding Achievement - Marketing**

**Organization: Lawline**

**Title: Lawline AI Hub Marketing Campaign**

**Submitted by: Angelica Cesario**

**Project Description:**

Lawline's AI Hub positions the company as the leading provider of AI education for legal professionals. This strategic marketing initiative was designed to prepare attorneys for the evolving landscape of AI in law, strengthen Lawline's brand authority, and create a central space to drive users to engage with our AI content. The campaign exemplifies best-in-class marketing through its targeted audience focus, clear and engaging communications, resourceful execution, and measurable results, with high engagement in AI courses as the key success metric.

**Award Category: Frank V. Harris Award of Professional Excellence - Programs**  
**Organization: Law Society of Ontario (LSO)**  
**Title: Foundations of Sole Practice**  
**Submitted by: Michelle D. Kemper, Michelle Ryan, and Jhonalizha Ravao**  
**Project Team: LSO Continuing Professional Development Staff**

### **Project Description:**

*You run your practice, so it doesn't run you*

As of January 1, 2025, lawyers and paralegals declaring as sole practitioners for the first time must complete the Foundations of Sole Practice course, delivered by the Law Society.

The *Foundations of Sole Practice* course provides licensees who are starting out as sole practitioners with a road map to the critical information they need to know. Delivered through 30 hours of online content in a modular format, the course covers the areas of practice that result in the highest incidence of complaints, negligence claims and identified practice deficiencies. By focusing on these core aspects, the course is designed to help set licensees up for successful practice and effective client management.

This initiative was approved by Convocation as part of the Law Society's Continuing Competence Framework review, aimed at ensuring and improving career-long licensee competence.

*Foundations* is an online and fully realized learning tool to help sole practitioners (lawyers and paralegals) maintain and enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities at the beginning of their career as a sole practitioner. It is available in English and in French, with accessibility features embedded within the course.

*Foundations* is comprised of 5 modules and 66 subsections broken into the following topic areas:

1. Professional Obligations including duties to clients, duties to third parties, Equality/Diversity/Inclusion principles, pro bono options
2. Business Matters including business planning, marketing planning, operations of a law firm
3. Managing Money including how to bill, general accounting, trust accounting
4. Client Management including initiating client relationships, ongoing client relations, and file management
5. Managing Risk including contingency and succession planning, approaches to managing stress and promoting wellness, and elements of Law Society/LAWPRO compliance

In summary, *Foundations* is a robust, inviting, content rich online course, that takes an innovative approach – teaching licensees on how to start as a Solo, with success, correctness, and competence at the forefront (and with a bit of humour, too).

**Award Category: Award of Outstanding Achievement - Programs**

**Organization: Minnesota Continuing Legal Education**

**Title: AI and the Law Conference**

**Submitted by: Owais Ahmed, Tim Morrow, Maria Sampson**

**Project Team: Owais Ahmed, Tim Morrow, Maria Sampson**

### **Project Description:**

The AI and the Law Conference (AIRC) was Minnesota CLE's first full-day conference devoted entirely to the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in legal practice. Designed to explore how AI is transforming the legal profession, the Conference brought together nationally recognized legal technologists and experienced local practitioners to provide an in-depth look at both the opportunities and challenges AI presents across various areas of law and legal practice.

The agenda featured a keynote panel and 15 all-new sessions, including 12 breakout topics that allowed attendees to personalize their learning experience. Topics covered AI's impact on legal ethics, intellectual property, contracts, employment law, data privacy, litigation, and more. With content spanning from introductory concepts to hands-on demonstrations using tools like ChatGPT, the Conference equipped attendees with foundational understanding and practical skills to navigate the evolving legal-tech landscape.

Conceived as Minnesota's flagship AI program for legal professionals, AIRC was intentionally built to serve a diverse audience from those newly exploring AI to those already integrating it into their practice. Minnesota CLE set out to create a comprehensive, engaging and practical agenda that would meet the diverse needs of attorneys at varying stages of AI experience.

The curriculum blended big-picture plenaries with breakout sessions tailored to specific practice areas and skill levels. Plenary sessions included broad, universally relevant topics such as *How Generative AI Is Changing Legal Practice and How Attorneys Are Adopting It*, as well as *AI Legislative, Regulatory, and Case Law Update*, and *How the Judiciary Is Using AI and the Impact on Access to Justice*. These sessions laid a strong foundation and set the big picture context for the Conference.

To further engage attendees and accommodate a variety of learning styles, Minnesota CLE introduced a new and innovative tiered format through gamified breakout tracks. Attendees were invited to "level up" as they progressed through the day:

- Level 1 established foundational knowledge;
- Level 2 explored the impact of AI on specific practice areas like employment, business contracts, and data privacy;

- Level 3 offered a deeper dive into how AI is transforming intellectual property law with sessions on patents, copyrights, and trademarks;
- Level 4 delivered hands-on skill-building sessions where attendees could learn how to build a their own custom GPT, improve ChatGPT prompting, and create AI-generated visual content.

This gamified structure empowered attendees to self-direct their learning journey, allowing them to acquire knowledge and build skills at their own pace, all while having fun. The format not only delivered valuable content, but also supported long-term retention and skill development in an area of law that is evolving at remarkable speed.

AILC was more than a one-day CLE program. It was a strategic and innovative response to a fundamental shift in legal practice. Through thoughtful programming, experienced faculty, and creative delivery, Minnesota CLE provided attorneys with the tools and insights needed to stay ahead of the curve and make informed, ethical use of emerging AI technologies for their legal practice.

**Award Category: Award of Professional Excellence - Publications**  
**Organization: Oregon State Bar, Legal Publications Department**  
**Title: Courtroom Companion: Oregon Evidence**  
**Submitted by: Lorraine Jacobs, Manager, Oregon State Bar Legal Publications Department**  
**Project Team: Oregon State Bar, Legal Publications Department**

**Project Description:**

*Courtroom Companion: Oregon Evidence* was a collaborative project involving 21 seasoned trial attorneys, six judges, and the Oregon State Bar Legal Publications Department staff. The book was designed and written with the pressures and time constraints of the courtroom in mind. High quality materials were used for durability, extensive tabbing allows for quick access to relevant code sections, and the formatting on each page was designed to quickly draw the readers eye to the rules, objections, and responses.

The book chapters follow the organization of the Oregon Evidence Code. Each chapter lays out the text of the rule followed by a brief explanation, objections and responses, practice tips, and summaries of key cases. The users guide at the beginning not only offers guidance on how best to use the book but also offers a thoughtful analysis on the philosophy and methodology of objections.

This publication has been well received by Oregon attorneys and judges alike and is proving to be a valuable addition to the Oregon State Bar's reference library.

**Award Category: Award of Outstanding Achievement - Publications**

**Organization: ICLE**

**Title: Introducing Evidence at Trial, Fourth Edition**

**Submitted by: Rebekah Page-Gourley**

**Project Team:**

**Rebekah Page-Gourley, Lead Staff Attorney, legal editor**

**David Salamie, Editor Intermediate, copyeditor**

**Pamela Gillespie, Managing Editor**

**Christine Mathews, Editor**

**Karen Andrews, Production Specialist**

**Julia Kirkey, Editorial Assistant**

**Rachael Sedlacek, Online Resources and Publications Director**

**Jeff Kirkey, Chief Learning Officer**

**David Watson, Executive Director**

### **Project Description:**

*Introducing Evidence at Trial*, Fourth Edition, is a practical guide to handling evidentiary issues in the courtroom. Conveniently organizing 80 types of evidence into 14 streamlined chapters, this revised edition enhances usability by grouping related types of evidence together.

Discussion of each type of evidence includes:

- the full text of the relevant rules or statutes for easy reference
- a concise explanation of the application of the rules and relevant caselaw
- foundation requirements, and
- sample witness examinations drafted by attorneys with courtroom experience.

The book is formatted for accessibility and efficiency, both in print and online. The online edition, which is continually updated every two weeks, includes hyperlinks to primary law like statutes, court rules, and caselaw. An online summary of changes lists recent updates, and cross-references (hyperlinked online) allow users to easily move around the book chapters and other ICLE content. Both in print and online, a detailed index gives users quick access to the relevant chapter and section for particular types of evidence, and a table of contents enables easy perusal of covered topics.

In addition to making organizational improvements, the Fourth Edition covers a number of new types of evidence, such as offers to pay medical expenses, liability insurance, pleadings, vehicle data, GPS and location tracking, controlled-substance testing, police reports and investigations, and more. New chapters also expand on existing topics with discussion of recent caselaw and practice developments. For example, A revised introductory chapter provides judicial insights on procedural and trial advocacy topics. The new chapter on witnesses includes information on introducing lay and expert testimony, as well as testimony of other types of witnesses, rebuttal witnesses, and impeachment, direct, and cross examination. Three new chapters cover the hearsay rules in their entirety, including exceptions previously not addressed.

Our excellent contributing editors—the Honorable Janice K. Cunningham, Tiffany A. Buckley-Norwood, and Stephen H. Sinas—all energetically brought their expertise to this project. Existing and new authors also brought their expertise, helping ICLE staff to shape the newly organized chapters.

**Award Category: Award of Professional Excellence – Public Interest**

**Organization: Judicial Commission of NSW**

**Title: Coercive Control Project**

**Submitted by: Judicial Commission of NSW**

**Project Team: Judicial Commission of NSW staff**

### **Project Description:**

New South Wales introduced a new criminal offence for domestic violence, “coercive control” in July 2024. Coercive control is a pattern of behaviour by which the autonomy of a victim-survivor is eroded through behaviours that are psychologically, emotionally, financially, sexually or physically abusive, intimidating or violent. It is often a precursor to domestic violence death.

Offences such these have historically been under prosecuted. Providing education about what constitutes abusive behaviours to the general population and educating police, lawyers and judiciary was the goal of this project.

Our aim was to provide a suite of accessible resources to support judicial officers and lawyers, to keep victims informed and supported, assist judicial officers to conduct fair and trauma-informed hearings and obtain successful prosecutions. A better educated legal profession will always lead to better courtroom outcomes.

The project includes:

- **Coercive Control Resource page** on the Judicial Commission of NSW’s online portal the Judicial Information Research System (JIRS);
- Updating of court **Bench Books** available on the public website and also available on JIRS
- **Training** for judicial officers, particularly scenario-based learning

**Award Category: Award of Outstanding Achievement – Public Interest**

**Organization: New York State Bar Association**

**Title: Legal Assistance 2024 Partnership Conference**

**Submitted By: New York State Bar Association**

**Project Team: Stefanie Markiewicz and Eunice Bencke**

**Project Description:**

The New York State Bar Association Legal Assistance Partnership Conference was developed to meet the needs of hundreds of attorneys from civil legal service organizations, the court system, law schools, assigned counsel programs, and private law firms across New York State to provide access to justice training. The conference is planned through a Partnership Steering Committee, which consists of the Co-Chairs of the NYSBA Committee on Legal Aid, the NYSBA President’s Committee on Access to Justice Chairs, and various members of the pro bono community. Topics are solicited through a Pro Bono Coordinators Network which includes the Empire Justice Center, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, the Legal Project and local bar associations. The Commercial & Federal Litigation Section, the Dispute Resolution Section, 50+ Section, and Young Lawyers Section also sponsored the program. Course and topic proposals were received from a variety of non-profits and civil legal service organizations, ranging from Legal Aid, the Crime Victims Justice Project to Unity House of Troy and Empire Justice Center.

The goal of Legal Assistance Partnership Conference is to address relevant issues that New York civil legal organizations, their staff attorneys, and attorneys engaging in pro bono work are facing and to create a renewed sense of purpose to do the public good. With decreases in funding and budget cuts, there is a need for programming devoted to civil legal service topics and training. The 2024 conference consisted of 25 CLE programs and additional non-CLE programming. Over 500 registrants attended the program with eleven sponsors. All 25 CLE programs are recorded and made available to registered participants, from 11 educational tracks: Benefits, Consumer Bankruptcy & Foreclosure, Disability Advocacy Programs, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Domestic Violence & Family, Education, Immigration, Health, Housing, Pro Bono and Wage & Employment. CLE programs are submitted through an RFP process that is disseminated throughout New York State, encouraging equal geographic representation and topics are then selected by the Partnership Steering Committee. The program continues to serve as a resource for attorney volunteers, legal aid attorneys and civil legal service groups.

Panelists provided guidance on how to represent individuals in the various areas of practice and the legal issues facing civil legal services providers. The program materials provided an overview of the law and included sample checklists and forms. Program participants were equipped with the necessary training to serve as staff attorneys for civil legal service providers and as pro bono volunteers assisting clients. The in-person conference enabled attorneys from statewide organizations to come together, network and share ideas.

The Partnership Conference was coordinated and administered using available resources. Staff members from various departments worked together to assist in administering the event

including recruiting top speakers from various state and federal agencies and service providers, assisting with registration, marketing the conference, posting of the program materials and processing over 500 MCLE forms within 60 days of the program date to comply with NY MCLE rules.

**Award Category: John Day Memorial Award of Professional Excellence in Technology - Technology**  
**Organization: Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, Inc.**  
**Title: Enhancing Access & Efficiency: Evaluating AI-Assisted Transcription**  
**Submitted by: Annette Turcotte**  
**Project Team: Mark Rotondo, Annette Turcotte, Danielle Simmons, Kevin Nihill**

## **Project Description:**

### **Enhancing Access & Efficiency: Evaluating AI-Assisted Transcription for CLE Video Production**

A project to streamline video captioning workflows, reduce costs, and close the accessibility gap, ensuring all participants can fully engage with MCLE's programming.

Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education (MCLE), a nonprofit organization serving New England's legal community, produces nearly 1,000 hours of CLE annually. To improve accessibility, especially for participants who are hard of hearing, MCLE launched a technology project to provide real-time captioning for live streams and timely closed captions for on-demand programs.

Previously, the organization relied on third-party services averaging \$100,000 annually and causing delays of up to two weeks. The new solution aims to streamline captioning, reduce costs, and close the accessibility gap, ensuring all participants can fully engage with MCLE's programming.

This project compared three transcription services:

- **Zoom AI Transcription** (included with MCLE's existing license)
- **Mediasite Transcription** (AI-based, additional cost)
- **Full-Service Human-Powered Transcription** (highest accuracy, highest cost)

A series of side-by-side tests were conducted on several MCLE programs of varying duration over three weeks. Feedback was collected from MCLE's editorial, media production, and program staff to evaluate accuracy, usability, and workflow integration. The results demonstrated that Zoom's AI transcription offered accuracy comparable to human transcription, with the added benefits of real-time availability, ease of use, and a significant cost reduction.

As a small nonprofit with limited resources, MCLE adopted a strategic and resourceful approach to the project:

- Maximize the value of existing Zoom licenses, eliminating the need for new software purchases;

- Avoid additional expenses for consultants or third-party services by empowering internal staff to lead the testing, evaluation, and deployment of the solution, ensuring a hands-on, cost-effective process; and
- Choose a solution that streamlines workflows rather than adds complexity.

The result is a cost-saving implementation that delivers high-impact outcomes—real-time closed captions, searchable transcripts across MCLE’s entire video library, and content for future AI projects— significantly enhancing accessibility, content management, and revenue generation.

MCLE's use of Zoom’s AI transcription service for CLE video production is an innovative repurpose of existing technology. Initially utilized for staff meeting support, Zoom’s transcription feature was adapted and deployed during MCLE programs, thoroughly tested, and fine-tuned to function as the primary tool for live captions, on-demand captions, and full written transcripts. This innovation meets the rigorous standards required for legal education delivery and creates a marketable product for sale. By creatively leveraging common technology, MCLE has significantly enhanced accessibility and efficiency while generating revenue by repurposing transcripts for new AI projects in a high-impact, sustainable manner.

In conclusion, MCLE’s innovative use of Zoom’s AI transcription service has transformed our operations and the participant experience. By leveraging existing resources and empowering internal staff, we implemented real-time closed captions and searchable transcripts across our entire video library, all while reducing costs. This project demonstrates how a small nonprofit can strategically leverage existing technology to achieve high-impact results, modernize CLE production, and expand accessibility. Scalable and replicable, it provides a roadmap for other CLE organizations.

**Award Category: Award of Outstanding Achievement - Technology**  
**Organization: American Health Law Association (AHLA)**  
**Title: A.I. Podcasts of AHLA's *Health Law Daily***  
**Submitted by: Steffan Welch**  
**Project Team: Rob Anderson, Lisa Cohen Salerno, Matt Ausloos**

**Project Description:**

AHLA's *Health Law Daily* has for years been one of the organization's "staple" products and member benefits whereby readers can gain a digest of late-breaking news relevant to the area(s) relevant to their practices. With the advent of this information in podcast format, it has become not only much more accessible but opens it up to new audiences, as it may now be consumed while "on the go," such as while commuting – some in this position may not have had time to read the *Daily* in its previous text-only format.

AHLA uses an A.I. reader to create the podcasts, which are then uploaded to a private RSS feed from which AHLA members can access them.