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## Funding News

📌 **2004 State Legislative Funding Recap** - There was good news and bad news in terms of state legislative funding for legal services this year. Although state funding declined or was eliminated in several states, legal services advocates in other states were successful in increasing funding. The Virginia legislature increased the filing fee surcharge by \$1 for the second year in a row; this will increase revenue for legal services from approximately \$2.5 million to \$3.5 million. In New Jersey, the legislature agreed to increase the state appropriation by \$4.4 million, primarily to cover the loss to legal aid programs from a drop in IOLTA revenue. (Increases in state funding in Maryland and Washington were reported in the June issue of *Legal Services NOW*.) For more information about Virginia, contact Mark Braley, Executive Director, Legal Services Corporation of Virginia, [markb@lscv.org](mailto:markb@lscv.org), 804-782-9438; for New Jersey, contact De Miller, Executive Director, Legal Services of New Jersey, [dmiller@lsnj.org](mailto:dmiller@lsnj.org), 732-572-9100.

The 2005 legislative session is likely to bring more of the same, with some states facing possible reduction while others will have an opportunity to increase state funding. For more information about legislative activities, contact Meredith McBurney, Director, ABA Project to Expand Resources for Legal Services, [mm8091@aol.com](mailto:mm8091@aol.com), 303-329-8091.

📌 **Settlement Provides \$2.5 Million Award to Minnesota Legal Aid Programs** - The hard work of legal aid leaders in Minnesota to develop a program to obtain cy pres awards really paid off recently. The settlement of a statewide class action lawsuit brought on behalf of Minnesota consumers against Microsoft included payment of \$2.5 million to Legal Aid in Minnesota. The award will go into the endowment fund for legal aid programs in Minnesota; it is expected to generate at least \$125,000 per year on an ongoing basis. For more information, contact Jerry Lane, Executive Director, Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance, [jlane@midmnlegal.org](mailto:jlane@midmnlegal.org), 612-746-3701.

## Pro Bono Developments

📌 **Cleveland Bar Seeks Pro Bono Pledges** - A pro bono initiative launched by Cleveland Bar Association President David Kutik encourages Cleveland law firms to commit a specific number of hours to pro bono work, create pro bono budgets, and establish volunteer projects. To date, seventeen law firms and one corporation have pledged over 61,000 hours of pro bono work. The Cleveland Bar is partnering with the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland to offer the law firms pro bono opportunities through legal clinics that will address client issues such as elder law and tax law. For more information, contact Ann Porath at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, (216) 861-5332 or by e-mail at [amporath@lascleve.org](mailto:amporath@lascleve.org).

## Court and Bar News

📌 **Texas Supreme Court Holds Hearing on Access to Justice** - On September 8, the Supreme Court of Texas held a hearing on the status of legal aid in Texas to determine what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done to ensure equal access to the justice system for the poor. The Court has held this type of hearing only once before, in 2000. Based on that hearing, the Court created the Texas Access to Justice Commission to coordinate the delivery of legal services at a

statewide level. In conjunction with this year's hearing, the Court received a report from the Commission on the status of civil legal services to the poor in Texas. The report, which describes major progress since the creation of the Commission, can be downloaded from [www.ATJsupport.org](http://www.ATJsupport.org), the web site of the Access to Justice Support Project. For more information contact Bob Echols, ABA/NLADA Access to Justice Project Director, at 207-833-7869.

📌 **Illinois Adopts Limited Admission Rule for Legal Services Lawyers** - The Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (ARDC) recently adopted a rule providing for limited admission of legal services program lawyers. Rule 717 permits an attorney admitted in another state or the District of Columbia to receive a limited license to practice law when employed by a legal services, public defender, or law school clinical program providing legal assistance to indigent persons. The rule went into effect July 1, 2004. The text of the rule is available at <http://www.iardc.org/rules.html#717> or for more information, contact the Illinois ARDC at (312) 565-2600.

📌 **South Central Access to Justice Leaders Meet to Set Goals and Strategies** - Over 20 Access to Justice (ATJ) leaders from Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi came together for a regional Access to Justice Meeting at the Mississippi Bar Center in Jackson on August 20-21. The group included judges, bar leaders, and legal aid and bar staff. Mississippi Chief Justice Jim Smith opened the meeting, which was convened to identify goals and next steps to further equal justice in the participating states. Discussions focused on issues about the structure for ATJ leadership and coordination, fundraising, IOLTA yields, and pro bono services. For more information contact Bob Echols, ABA/NLADA Access to Justice Project Director, at 207-833-7869.

### Washington Update

On July 8, 2004, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4574, the Commerce, Justice State, Judiciary and Related Agencies (CJS) FY 2005 appropriations bill. H.R. 4574 funds LSC at \$335.3 million. This is the same amount LSC received in FY 2004 after two government-wide rescissions reduced its \$338.8 million appropriation, but \$6 million over the President's request of \$329.3 million.

On September 15, 2004, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the FY 2005 CJS appropriations bill. The Senate bill, S. 2809, provides only \$335 million for LSC. The Senate had not considered the bill when Congress recessed for the 2004 election.

In addition to the funding differences, H.R. 4574 allows LSC to spend up to \$1,000,000 from carry over funds for a law school student loan repayment pilot program in fiscal year 2005. S. 2809 does not include the loan repayment provisions. S. 2809 retains the \$2,849,000 for grants to offset losses due to census adjustments included in the FY 2004 LSC appropriation; H.R. 4574 does not include this provision.

LSC will continue to be funded by a series of Continuing Resolutions until an FY 2005 appropriations bill is enacted. It is likely that H.R. 4574/S. 2809 will be included in an omnibus bill that will be considered after the election. For more information contact Julie Strandlie, Director, Grassroots Operations/Legislative Counsel, at [jstrandlie@staff.abanet.org](mailto:jstrandlie@staff.abanet.org) or 202/628-1764.



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For more information about specific items, call the contact person listed for that item. To contribute items to future issues of *LEGAL SERVICES NOW*, or for general information about this bulletin, contact Bev Groudine at 312/988-5771, fax 312/988-5483 or e-mail [bgroudine@staff.abanet.org](mailto:bgroudine@staff.abanet.org).