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Funding News

➤ **Mississippi Obtains State Funding for Civil Legal Services** – The Mississippi legislature passed and the governor signed a bill adding \$5 to all civil court filing fees, with the proceeds going to the Civil Justice Fund administered by the Supreme Court for civil legal services to the indigent. It is estimated that this filing fee addition will produce between \$500,000 and \$800,000 annually. With the passage of this legislation, there remain only six states that do not have some state legislative funding (either court fees/fines or appropriation) for legal services. For more information about the Mississippi filing fee, contact Ben Piazza, Co-Chair of the Mississippi Bar Delivery of Legal Services Committee, at bipiazza@schoolaw.com or 601/956-2345. For more information about state funding generally, contact Meredith McBurney, Director, ABA Project to Expand Resources for Legal Services (PERLS), at mm8091@aol.com or 303/329-8091.

➤ **Innovative Cy Pres Rules Approved in Washington State and North Carolina** – The Washington State Supreme Court recently approved a change to its class action rule to benefit legal services. In matters where the claims process has been exhausted and residual funds remain, not less than 25% of those funds are to be disbursed to the Legal Foundation of Washington (the IOLTA program) to support activities and programs that promote access to the civil justice system for low income residents. The North Carolina legislature, in its 2005 session, amended its Rules of Civil Procedure to provide that unclaimed residuals in class action litigation be divided equally between the Indigent Person's Attorney Fund and the North Carolina State Bar for the provision of civil legal services for indigents. For more information on the Washington rule, contact Andrea Axel, Special Project Coordinator, Legal Foundation of Washington, at andrea@legalfoundation.org or 206/624-2536. For more information on the North Carolina legislation, contact Evelyn Pursley, Executive Director, NC IOLTA, at epursley@ncbar.org or 919/828-0477.

➤ **States Converting to Mandatory IOLTA See Increases in Revenue** – Between July 2004 and July 2005, the IOLTA rules in four states (Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah and Indiana) were amended to require that all eligible lawyers participate in IOLTA. In comparing the average monthly IOLTA income generated in each of these states during the six months before mandatory IOLTA conversion to the most current monthly income figures available, the increases have been impressive. Oklahoma, which converted from voluntary IOLTA to mandatory, has seen a 417.9% increase. South Carolina, Utah and Indiana, each of which converted from opt-out to mandatory IOLTA, have seen increases of, respectively, 77.6%, 162.5% and 267.4%. While interest rates are certainly on the rise, there is no doubt that conversion to mandatory IOLTA has been a major factor in these striking increases in revenue. Currently, 31 jurisdictions have mandatory IOLTA rules in place. For more information on IOLTA conversion efforts, contact Bev Groudine, Counsel, ABA Commission on IOLTA, at bgroudine@staff.abanet.org or 312-988-5771.

Pro Bono News

➤ **University of Idaho College of Law Adopts Mandatory Pro Bono Graduation Requirement** – The University of Idaho College of Law has adopted a new pro bono program that will apply

prospectively to students entering in 2006 and will require each student to perform at least 40 hours of pro bono service before graduation. Pro bono work will consist of the services outlined in ABA Model Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1 and must be done without compensation and without academic credit. The College of Law will become one of only 31 law schools across the country to require public service as a condition of graduation. The program will be headed by Pro Bono Program Director Jack McMahon, former Chief Deputy to the Attorney General of Idaho and former Idaho State Bar President. For more information, contact Jack McMahon at johnjcmahon@cableone.net or the College of Law at 208/885-4977.

➤ **ABA Child Custody Project Announces Grants** – The ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project has announced awards to six programs totaling \$50,000. The Project's grants are being made in conjunction with its release of a six-hour video training series, accompanied by a 700-plus page manual. The 2006 grants are being awarded to programs and projects to use the ABA training series, the ABA Standards, and the NCCUSL Uniform Act to train and guide attorneys for children in their jurisdiction. Recipients are Oklahoma Indian Legal Services - \$12,000; Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland - \$10,000; Pima County Superior Court and University of Arizona College of Law - \$8,000; Justice for Children Project, Ohio State University College of Law - \$8,000; Kids First Law Center, Iowa - \$7,500; and ChildLaw Services, West Virginia - \$4,500. For more information about the grants, the Project, or becoming a Grant Advocate to help fund future grants, contact project Director Linda Rio Reichmann, at lrio@staff.abanet.org or 312/988-5805.



Washington Update

More than 250 ABA and state/local/specialty bar leaders from across the country convened in Washington, D.C. earlier this month for ABA Day to meet with members of Congress and lobby on a wide range of issues including increased funding for the Legal Services Corporation. The Bush Administration has proposed a \$16 million decrease in LSC funding for FY07, which would reduce funding to \$310.2 million—an amount less than LSC received in 1981. The LSC Board has requested that Congress increase its funding in FY07 by \$85 million, which would bring LSC's budget to \$411 million. Senators Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Reps. Jim Ramstad (R-MN) and Bill Delahunt (D-MA) are circulating Congressional letters in support of increased funding for LSC. The ABA and the organized bar grassroots network actively support this effort. For more information contact Julie Strandlie, Director, Grassroots Operations/Legislative Counsel, at jstrandlie@staff.abanet.org or (202) 628-1764.

WASHINGTON UPDATE

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.