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Funding News

✎ **Texas Legal Services Programs to Receive Share of New Strip Club Admission Fee** - The Texas legislature has authorized the establishment of a \$25 million trust fund to provide expanded funding for rape crisis programs and other entities that assist sexual assault victims. The state has earmarked \$2 million over the next two years to the Texas Supreme Court for grants to legal services programs to assist victims of sexual assault. The trust is funded by a \$5 admission fee at strip clubs. The fee, popularly known as the Pole Tax, will result in approximately \$80 million in revenue; the balance of the money will be used for Medicaid improvements. For additional information, contact Randy Chapman, Executive Director, Texas Legal Services Center, at rchapman@tlsc.org or 512/477-6000.

✎ **State Legislative Appropriations for Legal Services Continue to Increase** - Four more states - Hawaii, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Virginia - have reported solid increases in their state appropriations for legal services. The increases in these states, when added to the new funding in Texas (see above) and increases in New Mexico, New York and Washington reported previously (see *Legal Services Now* - May 8, 2007) bring this year's total increase to date to almost \$16,000,000. More good news is expected as other state legislatures complete their 2007 sessions in the next few months. To learn more, contact Meredith McBurney, ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives, at meredithmcburney@msn.com or 303/329-8091.

Pro Bono News

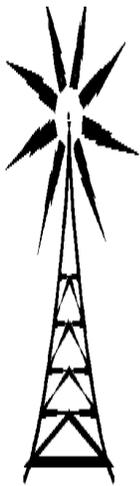
✎ **Maryland Report on 2005 Mandatory Pro Bono Reporting is Released** - The Administrative Office of the Courts of Maryland recently released its report on the mandatory reporting of attorney pro bono activity for 2005. Among the findings are that 62.3 percent of full-time attorneys practicing in Maryland reported doing some pro bono activity in 2005. With over 99 percent of active Maryland attorneys responding, the total number of pro bono hours reported was over 1.5 million. Among attorneys who provided pro bono service, 54.6 percent offered their services to people of limited means and 15.8 percent provided services to organizations serving the poor. In addition, attorneys reported a total of \$2,759,360 in financial contribution to organizations that provide legal services to people of limited means. The full text of the report is available online at http://www.courts.state.md.us/probono/probonoreport_2005.pdf. For further information about the report, contact Sharon Goldsmith, Executive Director, Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland, at sgoldsmith@probonomd.org or 410/837-9379.

✎ **Minnesota State Bar Association Amends its Government Attorney Model Pro Bono Policy** - The Minnesota State Bar Association recently adopted an amendment to its Model Pro Bono Policy and Procedures for Government Attorneys. The new model policy is based on the principle that pro bono work is possible for every public lawyer and every public law office. Some of the recommendations of the policy include: 1) the promotion of pro bono activities in which government attorneys can participate; 2) the appointment of pro bono coordinators; 3) the implementation of flexible schedules when feasible; and 4) some use of office resources. For further information, contact Steve Hirsch, Access to Justice Director of the Minnesota State Bar Association, at shirsch@mnbar.org or 612/278-6322.

Hot On the Web

 **Manual for Pro Bono and Legal Services Dispute Resolution Programs** - This publication, now in its 2nd edition, provides pro bono and legal services programs essential information for designing and implementing a mediation program. The manual provides governing boards, chief executives and mediation program administrators the information needed to start a new program or to strengthen an existing program. It addresses: the benefits of mediation; how to design a program, including staffing, recruitment of appropriate volunteer mediators, screening and case processing; the financial resources needed; and sample forms and training tools. To download a copy, go to http://www.abanet.org/dispute/credits_toc.html

 **Beyond the Myths: Get the Facts about Dispute Resolution** - This new brochure identifies the most common myths and barriers to the use of mediation for low income disputants. It addresses nine common myths or misconceptions held by legal services and pro bono practitioners. The subjects covered range from issues such as whether mediation is a fair means of dispute resolution for low income disputants, including those with domestic violence issues, to the ability to enforce mediation agreements. To download the brochure, go to http://meetings.abanet.org/webupload/commupload/DR222000/otherlinks_files/Mythbuster_Guide.pdf



Washington Update

A House Appropriations Subcommittee and the full Senate Appropriations Committee in June approved significant funding increases for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). The House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) increased LSC funding to \$377 million, a \$28 million increase over the FY 2007 level of \$348.6 million. The full Senate Appropriations Committee increased funding to \$390 million, a \$42 million increase over last year. The President had requested only \$311 million. The ABA supported the bipartisan LSC Board of Director's request for \$430.6 million, as a step toward closing the "justice gap." More than 160 representatives and more than 50 senators wrote House and Senate Subcommittee leadership, either jointly or on their own, to request a significant funding increase for LSC.

The full House Appropriations Committee and the full Senate are expected to consider their respective bills after the July 4th Congressional recess. For up to date and more detailed information, monitor the Governmental Affairs Office webpage on LSC at http://www.abanet.org/poladv/priorities/legal_services/ or contact Julie M. Strandlie, ABA Director, Grassroots Operations/Legislative Counsel, at 202 662-1764 or jstrandlie@staff.abanet.org.

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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.