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Funding News

➤ **State Legislative Funding Efforts Are Underway** – Legal services advocates in over a dozen states are mounting strong campaigns to obtain or increase their state legislative funding through appropriations or court fees and fines. States reporting activity include Arkansas, Iowa, Idaho, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming. For more information on this year’s legislative efforts, or to report activity in your state, contact Meredith McBurney, PERLS Director, ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives, at 303/329-8091 or meredithmcburney@msn.com.

➤ **Supreme Court of Illinois Adopts IOLTA Comparability Rule** – Effective June 1, 2007, lawyers practicing in Illinois will be required to place their IOLTA accounts only in a financial institution that pays those accounts the highest interest rate or dividend generally available at that institution to other customers when IOLTA accounts meet the same minimum balance or other qualifications. Known as “comparability,” this IOLTA revenue enhancement strategy has been adopted in a number of other states and has proven to be an important source of additional IOLTA income. For more information about this and other strategies for enhancing IOLTA revenue, contact Bev Groudine, Counsel, ABA Commission on IOLTA, at bgroudine@staff.abanet.org or 312/988-5771.

➤ **Mississippi’s Non-LSC Funding Increases Significantly** – Recent data demonstrates that strong, coordinated advocacy on the part of the state supreme court and top level state bar leaders, which began in 2003, has led to significant increases in funding for legal services programs in Mississippi. The Mississippi Supreme Court instituted a *pro hac vice* fee for legal services, which has produced up to \$175,000 annually; it approved the mandatory reporting of pro bono, with a donation option, which produced \$286,000 in the first year; and the court and the bar worked together to convince the legislature to pass a filing fee surcharge that is expected to generate approximately \$400,000 annually. Additional new funding has come from lawyers, other individuals and foundations. The recently approved IOLTA rule amendments, which include conversion from opt-out to mandatory IOLTA and the adoption of interest rate comparability, are expected to provide an additional revenue increase in 2007. For more information on these developments, contact Meredith McBurney, PERLS Director, ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives, meredithmcburney@msn.com or 303/329-8091.

Pro Bono News

➤ **ABA Adopts Policy Encouraging Lawyers to Provide Pro Bono Service Following a Major Disaster** – The American Bar Association House of Delegates at the 2007 Midyear Meeting in February overwhelmingly approved a *Model Court Rule on Provision of Legal Services Following Determination of Major Disaster*. The model rule would permit out-of-state lawyers to provide pro bono legal services in an affected jurisdiction. It also would allow lawyers in the affected jurisdiction whose legal practices had been disrupted by a major disaster to practice law on a temporary basis in an unaffected jurisdiction. The Recommendation and Report can be found at <http://www.abanet.org/leadership/2007/midyear/docs/journal/hundredfour.doc>. For more information, contact Tony Barash, Director, ABA Center for Pro Bono, at barasha@staff.abanet.org or 312/988-5773.

➤ **Montana Access to Justice Committee Adopts Model Law Firm Pro Bono Policy** – The State Bar of Montana's Access to Justice Committee drafted and approved a model pro bono policy for law firms. The policy restates the definition of pro bono as set forth in Rule 6.1 of the Montana Rules of Professional Conduct. Additionally, it provides for pro bono work to be considered in performance evaluations and compensation decisions, given equal consideration as other legal work, and for firms to designate a pro bono coordinator or pro bono committee. For additional information, contact Ann Gilkey, Equal Justice Coordinator, State Bar of Montana, at agilkey@montanabar.org or 406/447-2201.

Hot On the Web

📖 **Securing Equal Justice for All: A Brief History of Civil Legal Assistance in the United States** – This publication, prepared by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and revised in January 2007, provides a concise history of civil legal assistance for the low-income community in the United States, from its privately funded beginnings, through its achievement of federal funding, to its expansion and growth into a national program. To download a copy, go to http://www.clasp.org/publications/legal_aid_history_2007.pdf.

📖 **Investing in Justice: A Framework for Effective Recruitment and Retention of Illinois Legal Aid Attorneys** – This report, published by the Chicago Bar Foundation and the Illinois Coalition for Justice, is the first of its kind in Illinois to take an in-depth look at legal aid attorney recruitment and retention. It documents the low salaries and tremendous debt that are affecting the ability of legal aid lawyers to remain in their current positions. The study offers recommendations for how legal aid organizations, funders, law schools, the legal profession and federal and state governments can help address the problem. To obtain a copy, go to <http://www.chicagobarfoundation.org>.



Washington Update

In February, the new 110th Congress approved and the president signed into law H.J. Res. 20, the measure resolving the FY 2007 funding for all government programs, including the Legal Services Corporation. H.J. Res. 20 included \$348 million for LSC, a \$22 million funding increase. LSC was one of the few programs to receive a funding increase; most programs were level-funded from FY 2006.

Earlier in the month, the President submitted his annual budget request to Congress. For FY 2008, the Administration again asked Congress to cut LSC funding back to \$311 million. The bipartisan LSC Board also submitted its FY 2008 budget request, asking for \$430 million.

LSC funding will again be a focus for ABA Day in Washington; this year's program will occur April 17-18, 2007. For more information about the ABA's grassroots efforts in support of LSC or about ABA Day, please contact Julie M. Strandlie, ABA Director of Grassroots Operations/Legislative Counsel, at jstrandlie@staff.abanet.org or 202 662-1764.

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.